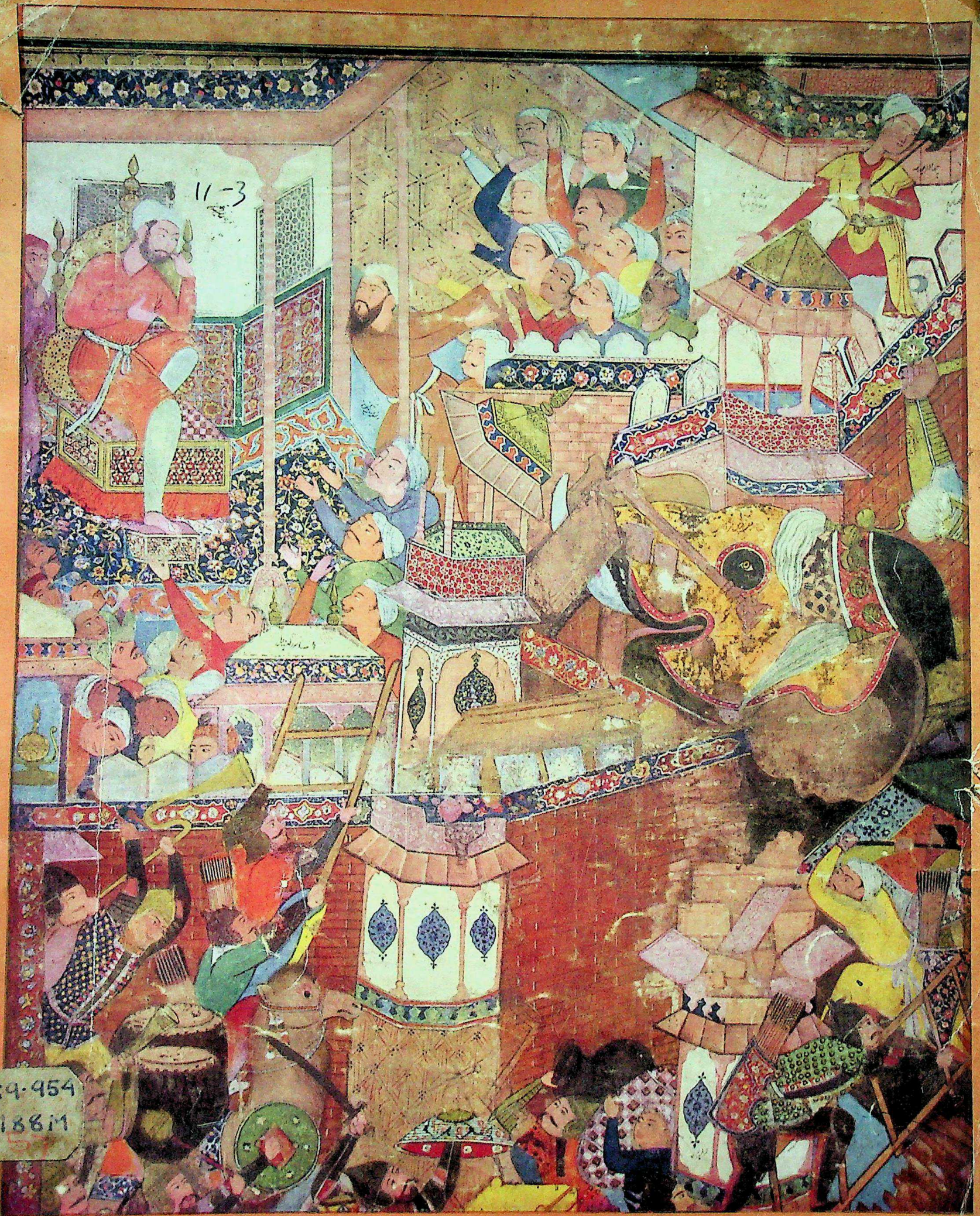




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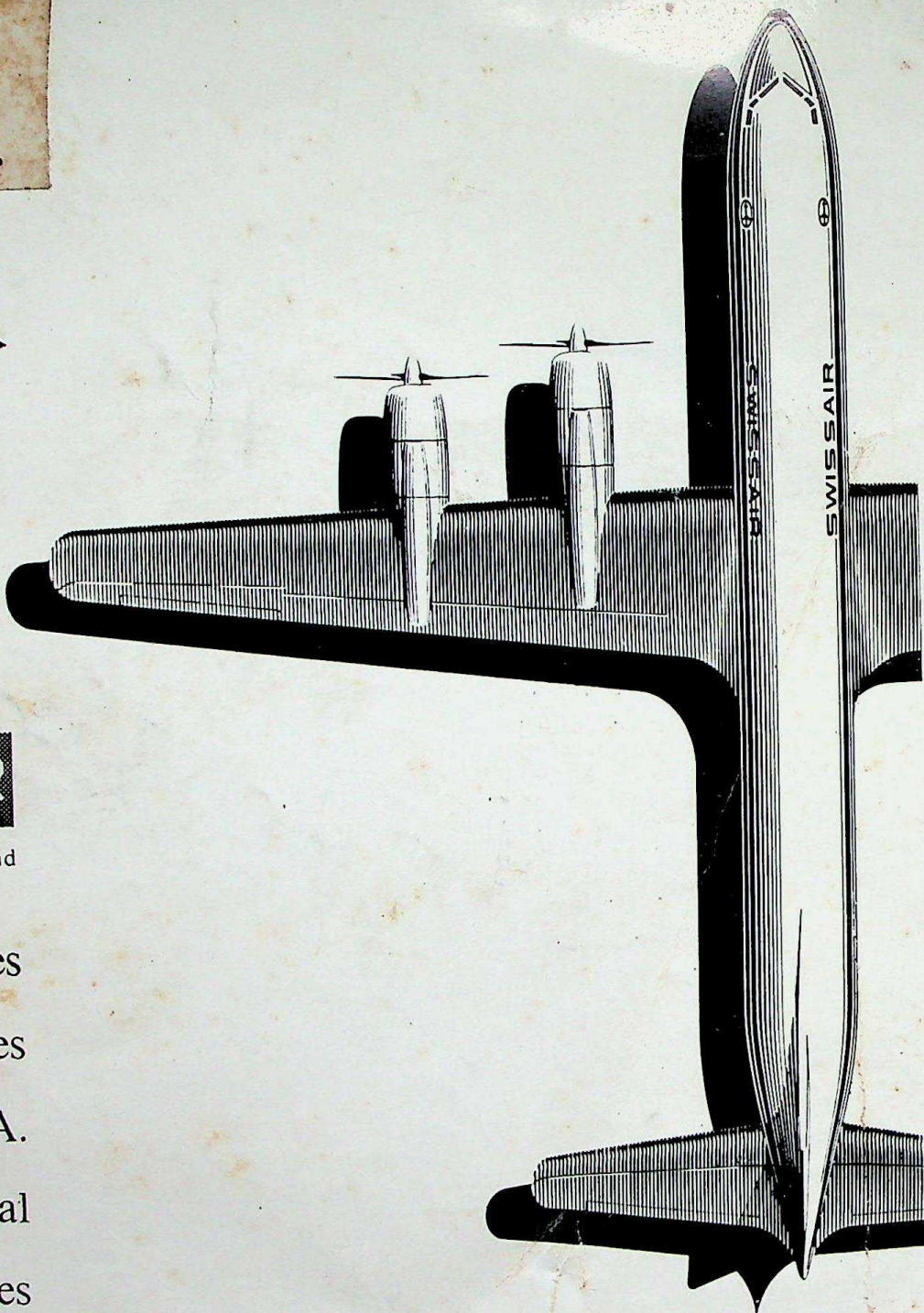
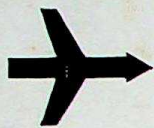
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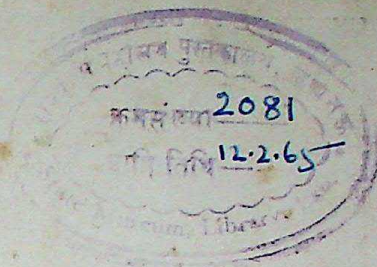
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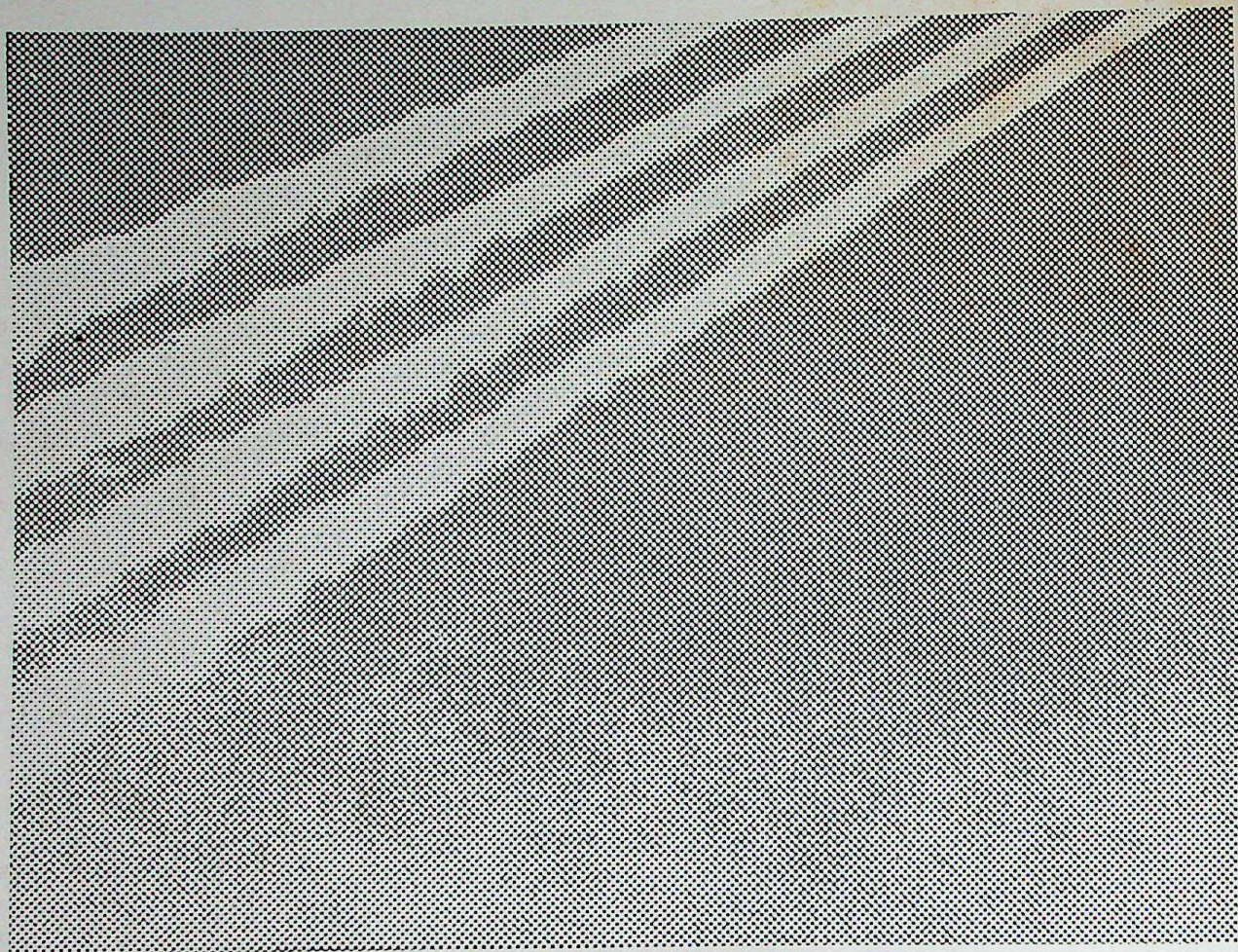
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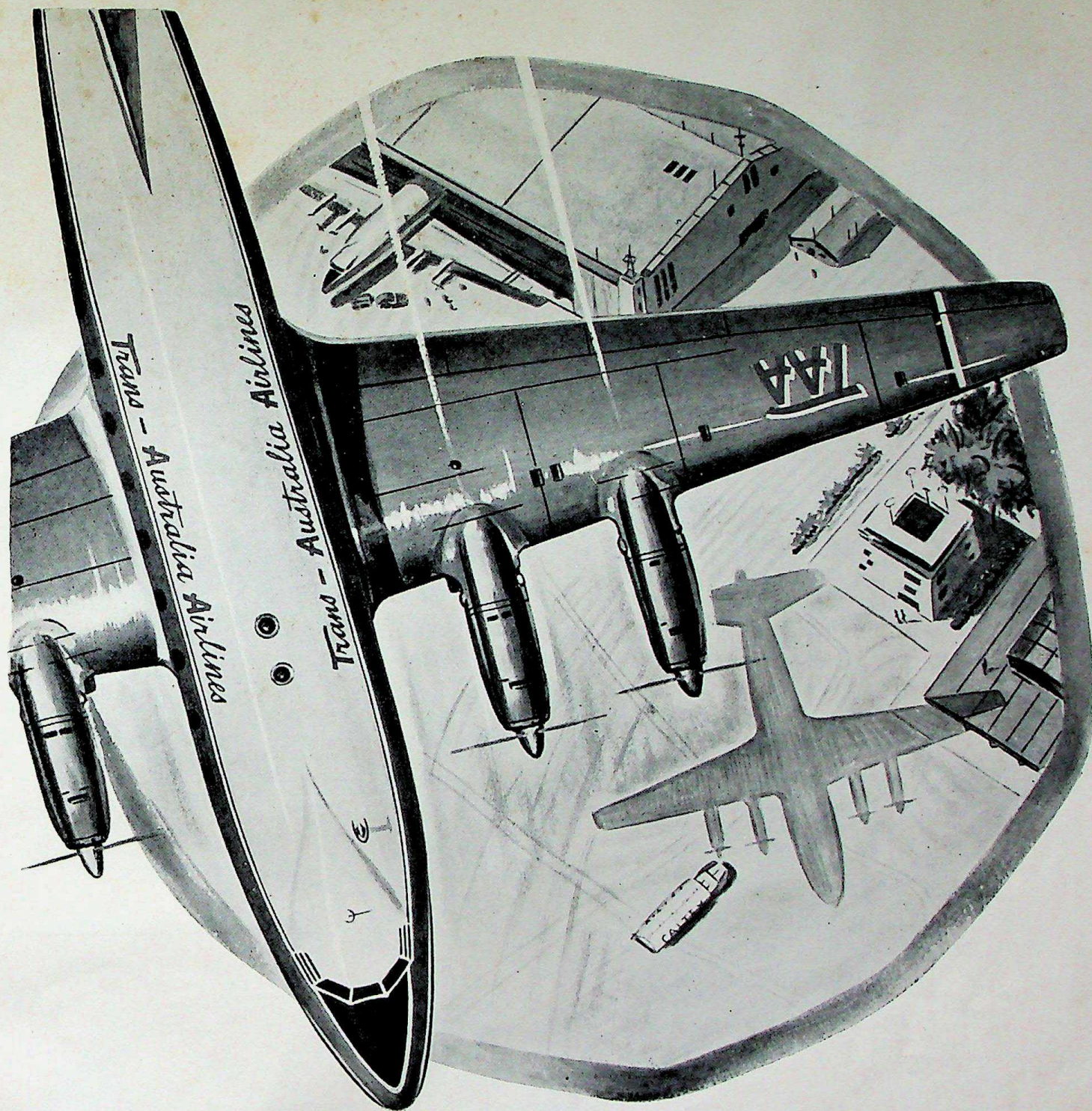


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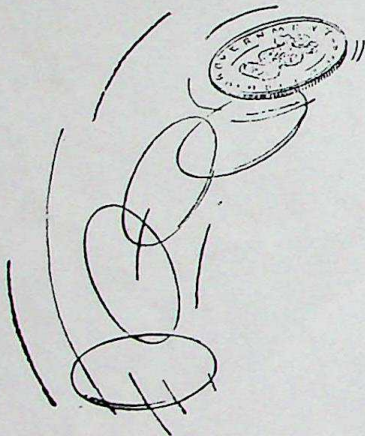
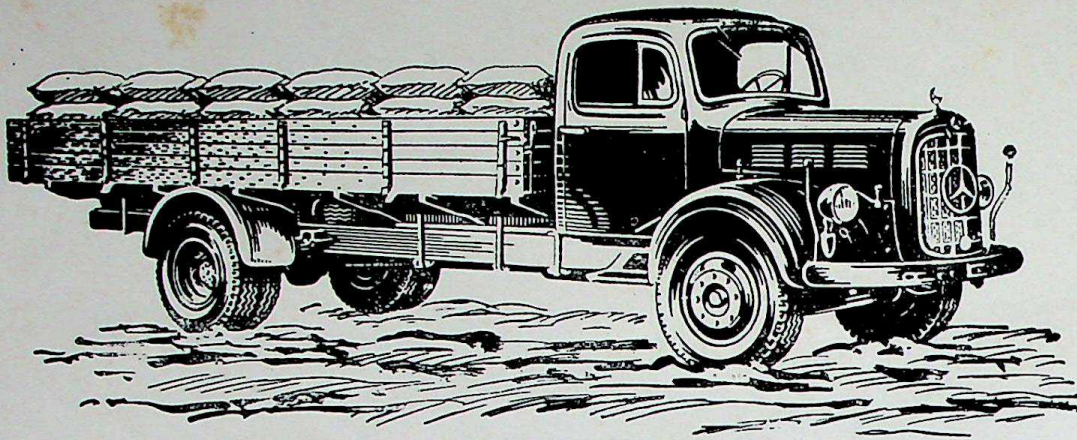
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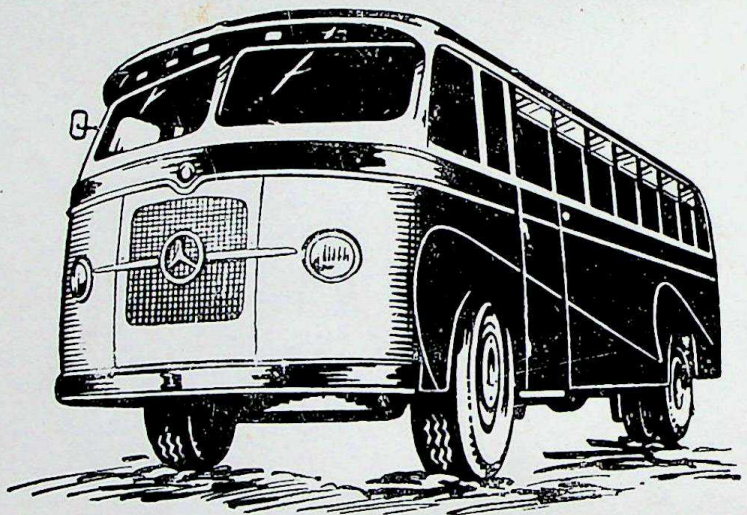
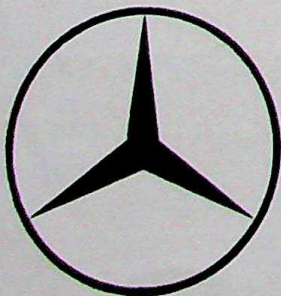
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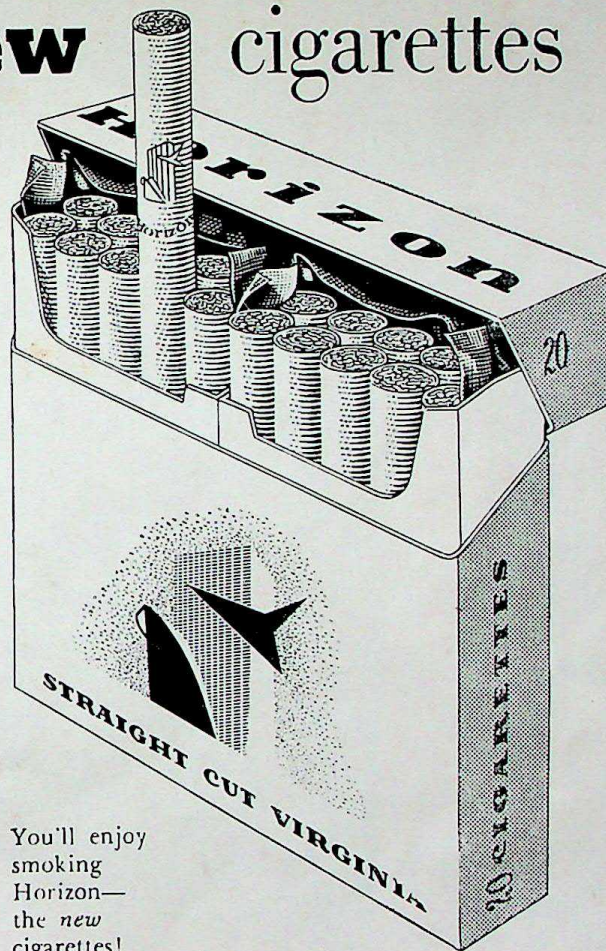
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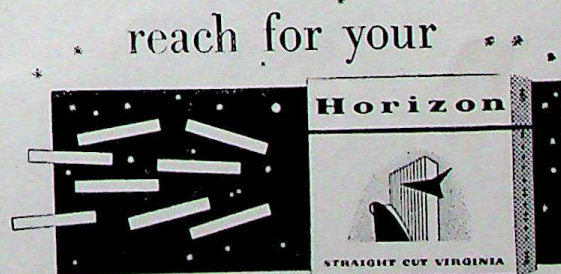
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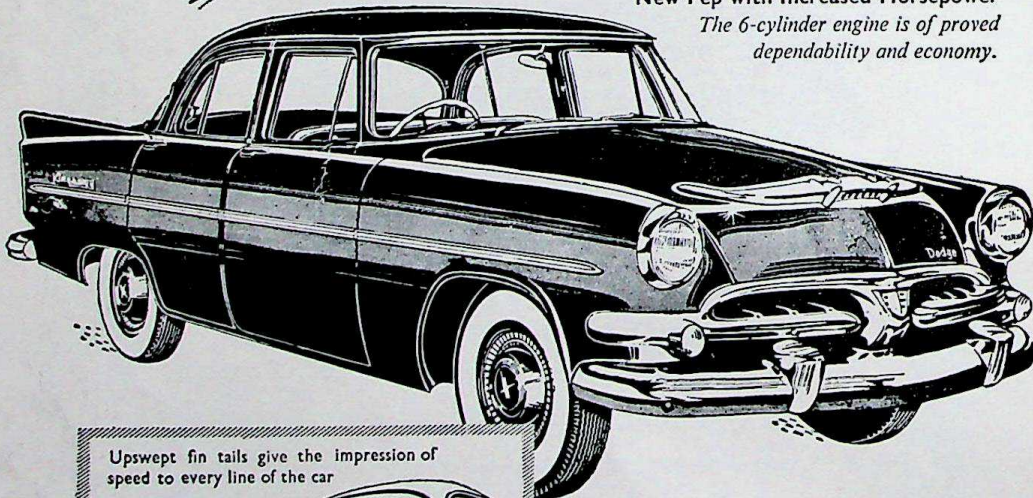
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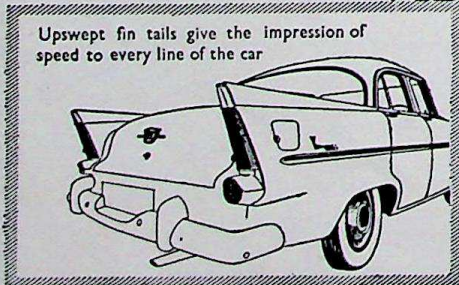
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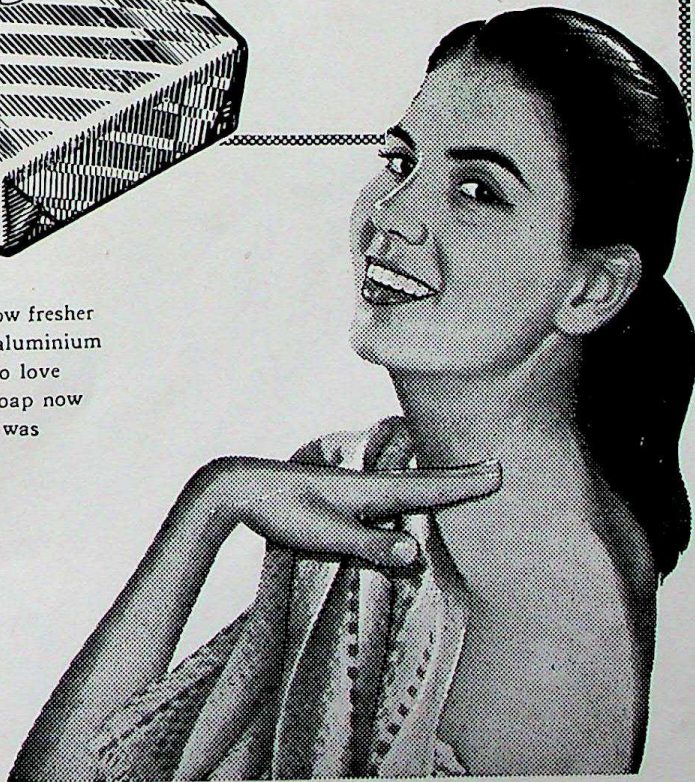


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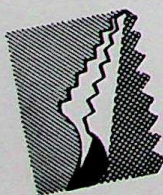
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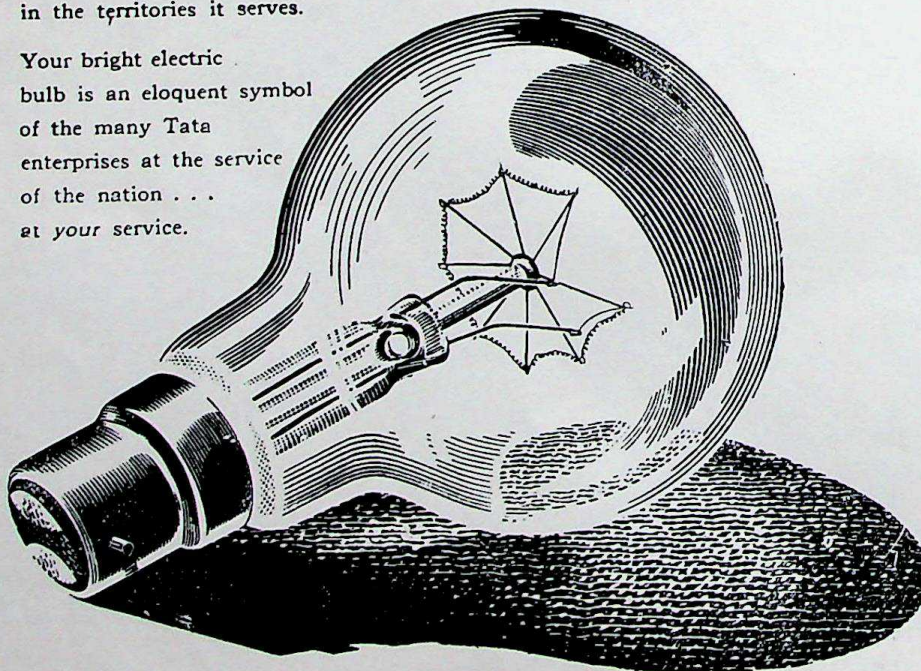
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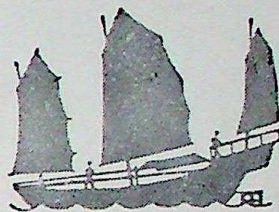
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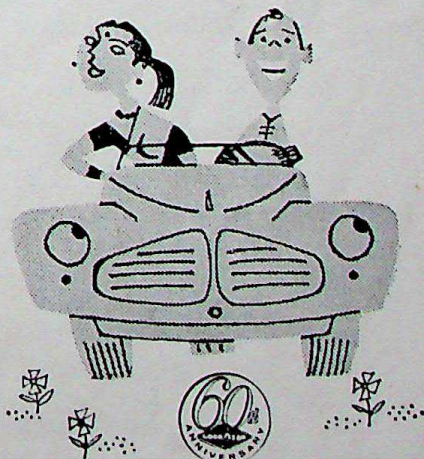
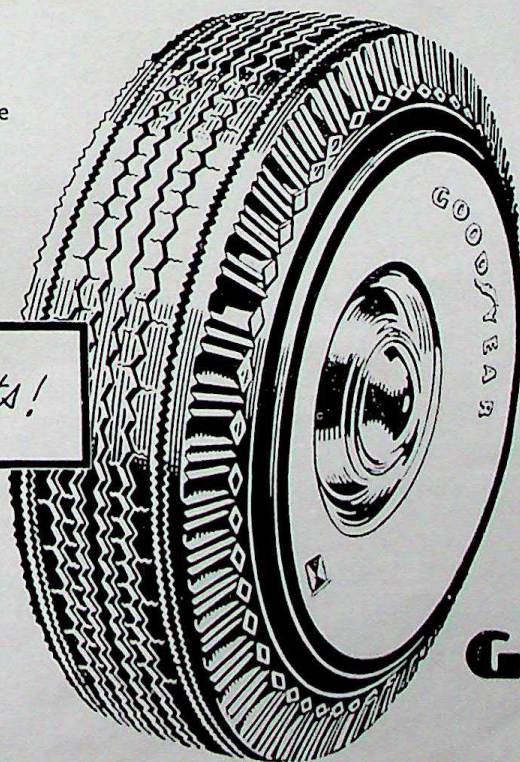
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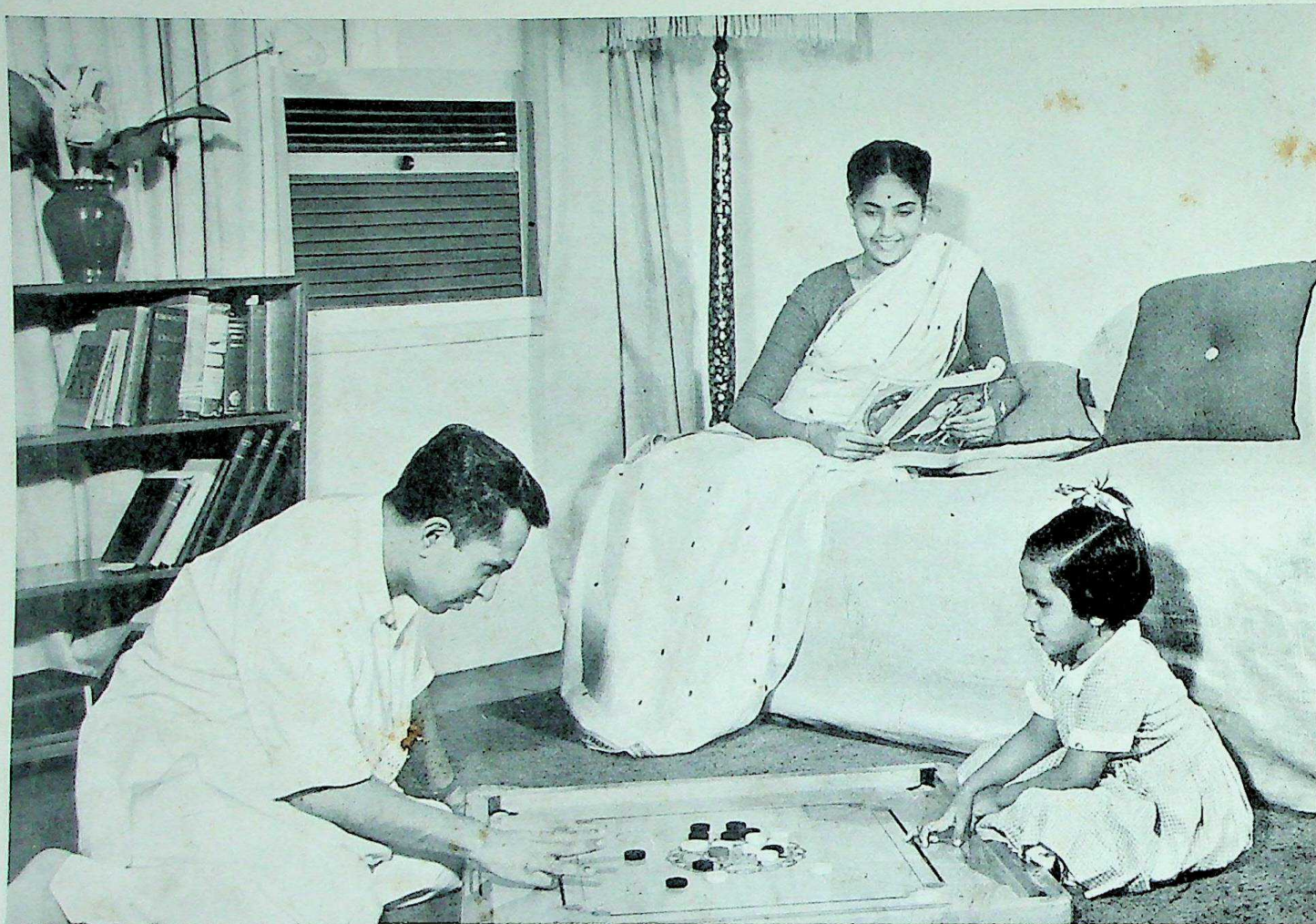


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VOLUME XI

JUNE 1958

NUMBER 3

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3. Miniatures from a 16th century
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THE MASTER

The role of the individual in the epochs of feudalism has not been appreciated adequately by the writers of history, even as they generally ignore the source-books from which information about the actual facts of a period may be gleaned. As the general impression of feudal history is violence, war, rapine and loot, the chroniclers dismiss whole eras as the sheerest barbarism in relation to our 'superior time' or narrate charming gossip about kings and queens. And when a figure like Akbar turns up before their gaze—a man, who, beginning with a few villages, builds up, in his own lifetime, a political empire, institutes an economic system, evolves a new architecture of the finest character, founds a new religion, establishes human and cultural relations with the far-flung world, collects one of the biggest libraries ever, and patronises all the civilised arts—then the historians and the biographers just sit like fascinated rabbits. For they are unable to comprehend the significance of a man of masterful will who puts his faith in the willing co-operation of his subjects, and builds higher and more organic forms of society by dint of an intensely imaginative vision of the future. The conclusion one arrives at after reading most of what has been written about Akbar is that the writers hail from the suburbs of the big cities of Europe, who can only understand the average kind of card, the soap king, or the marmalade king, and are, for the rest, too frightened and contemptuous of Asia, to admit of its concepts and its men.

The story of Akbar's grandfather sets a pattern of the ambitions of the feudal dynasty of Ferghana in Tadjekstan. A descendant of Timur Lang on his father's side, and of Chengiz Khan on his mother's side, Babur inherited the throne at the age of twelve, in A.D. 1494. He conquered Samarkand in 1497 and was much captivated by the splendid palaces, mosques and seminaries of this city. Doubtless, he cultivated his inherent taste in the poetry and the arts from Samarkand. He was not there long enough, however, to indulge his taste. Being forced to go southwards by the factions of his house, he rested in Kabul. The rumours of the fabulous wealth of India came to him, and he decided to conquer this land. On the field of Panipat, in 1526, he defeated the local muslim ruler and penetrated further. The bare landscape which had suffered from the depredations of nearly 400 years of muslim invasion, disillusioned him somewhat. 'There were no melons in India', he complained in his '*Memoirs*', 'and



BUILDER

hardly any gardens', and the people were indignant. He longed for the beauties and delicacies of Samarkand and Ferghana. In A.D. 1530 he died in Agra from a fever and was buried, according to his instructions, in Kabul.

His son, Humayun, succeeded him. As the throne was not secure against the bitterness of the rival muslim dynasties, Humayun lost his kingdom and was forced to leave India and find refuge in the court of Shah Tahmasp. During his flight, in the fort of Amarkot, Sind, Akbar was born, in 1542. The tiny baby had to be abandoned to the care of a foster-mother and other personal servants in Afganistan, while the father repaired to Iran. Shah Tahmasp was kind to him and offered him the most exquisite hospitality of his many palaces and gardens and equipped him with an army for the re-conquest of his lost dominion. But it was not until 1555 that Humayun succeeded in re-capturing Delhi and he died, through an accidental fall from his Library, the year after.

Akbar was barely thirteen years old when he came up to the throne. He was nominal ruler of Punjab, but was threatened on all sides. With the help of his father's brilliant and able Commander-in-Chief, Behram Khan, he faced Hemu, a Hindu General, at the historic field of Panipat. After a hard battle, Hemu was out-manoeuvred and caught. Behram Khan brought the wounded enemy leader before his young master and asked him to sever the head of the infidel with a sword. Akbar gave sign of his innate generosity and humanity by refusing to kill the Hindu General. It is not certain whether Behram Khan appreciated this attitude in his master, but he was devoted to the king and occupied Delhi and Agra with brilliant tactics. Later, he took Gwalior and Ajmer on behalf of Akbar and laid the basis of the Mughal Empire.

The ambitions of Behram Khan and his dominant influence on the young king were anathema to the rival courtiers, especially the two sons of Akbar's foster-mother. After Behram Khan's first revolts, which Akbar forgave, the master despatched the Commander-in-Chief on a pilgrimage to Mecca. The General could not bear this, revolted again, was subdued and put to death by the king. At this stage, Akbar assumed full powers and initiated certain campaigns which he felt were necessary to implement the basis of his rule.

'A monarch should be ever intent on conquest', he has said, 'otherwise his neighbours rise in arms against him; the army should be exercised in warfare, lest, from want of training, they become self-indulgent.' And with that genius for detailed organisation which marked his long career, he launched on his scheme to win alliances, by goodwill if possible and by force if necessary.

He sent his foster-brother, Azam Khan, to conquer Malwa in 1560. Azam Khan stormed the fortress of Mandu, looted the treasure and became possessed of an overbearing ambition, murdering Shamsuddin, the king's newly appointed minister. Akbar, whose rages were as terrible as his generous moods were full of infinite tenderness, struck Azam Khan with his hand and ordered him to be executed. Thus, at the age of twenty, he had cleared the field of all possible rivals within his own court and begun to develop a subtle theory of kingship which was to grow into a many-sided faith.

Through his upbringing in the insecure world of Afghanistan, Akbar had shown prodigious interest, even as a young boy, in riding, in the skill of the hunt, and in the instruments of war, but had neglected reading and writing. It is said that he could only sign his name. But, apart from the panegyrics of his friend and biographer, Abul Fazal, it seems that Akbar early displayed signs of extra-ordinary genius, not only as an initiator and organiser, but for understanding profound metaphysical truths and in his appreciations of the graces of good living and poetry, art, love of flowers and human relations.

The intensely inquiring nature of his intelligence is shown in almost every preoccupation which dominated him. If he was interested in war, he decided that he would have to devote much thought and labour to the drawing up of rules and manuals for the army. Thus he established regulations for the recruiting of troops, and the prevention of fraud on the part of the contractors in providing horses and equipment. He gave close attention to details of military strategy, inventing a gun barrel of spirally twisted iron that could not burst, as well as a machine for firing seventeen guns together with a single match. He inspected the workshops, which were always near his palace, for the founding of cannon and the manufacture of muskets. And he himself provided the example for musketry to his men on the parade ground, as on the field of battle. It was a bullet from Akbar's own musket which killed Jaimal, the Commander of Chitore in 1568.

Also, he was utterly fearless and confident, being capable of decisive action, not only in his encounters with the wild animals at the hunt, but in tackling state matters. This capacity derived from his inclination to go to the root of the matter, to grasp the principles and then carry out the project with minute attention to detail. It is not known whether he was the actual author of the revenue system, inaugurated in his reign, by his finance minister, Todar Mal, but the stamp of his wisdom is certainly visible in the assessment of land revenue, which was so thorough that its main principles have lasted to this day.

One thing seems certain that, unlike his grandfather,

whose spiritual home always remained in Central Asia, Akbar decided to accept Hindustan and its peoples, for what they were, to live here, to work and to unite the land by reconciling its desperate tendencies into a magnificent whole. And it was in this spirit, that he essayed his main task: 'To conquer India and to establish his Kingdom on principles of humanity and justice'.

This theory of kingship was something quite new in the medieval history of war-torn India, where any able Commander, with five hundred or so horsemen, could wrest a vast territory from the hands of weak, demoralized and caste-ridden peoples, prey to a fatalistic individualism not known in any other part of the world. The dynasties of the commanders were also short-lived, being based on merceneries of foreign blood who lived far from the native people and were only interested in pillage. Akbar looked for those elements of strength which were in the peasantry, in the artisans and the craftsmen and put his faith in villages from which he derived his main revenue.

The many times he set out to conquer the Hindu kingdoms he did so in no spirit of fanatical opposition to the Hindu faith, but with great understanding of the virtues of his opponents and with the ambition to become one with them. Early in his victorious career, he married the daughter of Raja Biharimal, the Maharaja of Amber, and he enrolled his wife's brother, Raja Mansingh, as a General in the army, entrusting him with important Commands. Also, he remitted the much-hated poll-tax taken from all Hindus by the erstwhile muslim rulers. And, in this way, by cultivating the friendship and loyalty of the indigenous peoples, he brought into his empire, Gondwana, and the impregnable fortress of Chitore, as well as the strongholds of Ranthambor and Kalinjar. It was not that he lacked the will to crush his enemies, but he was fired with the ambition to absorb and unite.

In 1572, he took advantage of the disorder in the court of the independent Sultans of Gujerat and annexed it to the Empire. Unfortunately, for him an insurrection broke out as soon as he returned to Agra. In the terrible heat of the Indian summer, he rode back, accompanied by a small force, to lift the siege of Ahmedabad Fort, where his own Governor was beleaguered. Covering a distance of 600 miles in a forced march of nine days, and on the afternoon of his arrival, he gained a decisive victory, with his three thousand horsemen, over the 20,000 strong cavalry of his rivals, on the outskirts of Ahmedabad.

In 1574, the bulk of northern India had been annexed, including the Sultanate of Bengal, except that the Emperor had to fight his brother—Muhammad Hakim, who came down from Kabul in 1580 with a cavalry of fifteen thousand.

In 1599 the kingdom of Khandesh was annexed, after the capitulation of the fortress of Asirgarh.

The other states of the Deccan resisted Akbar's attempts to incorporate them and they only fell about eighty years after his death.

The success of the military operations was founded on the replacement of the old and corrupt machinery of

provincial military Governors and standing armies by the establishment of governors who were to rule, according to the laws of justice, and through promotion of the welfare of all men, whatever their creeds and castes.

The Emperor early made Agra his capital in order to be within strategic distance of Rajputana and Central India. Here he had two sons, both of whom died. In great agony about achieving an heir to the throne, he approached a famous muslim saint, Seikh Salim Chisti, who lived at Sikri, 20 miles away from Agra. The divine prophesied the birth of a son who would survive.

Akbar frequently visited Salim Chisti at Sikri and, presumably, the village by the hill, exercised so complete a fascination over him, that he decided to build his capital there.

After the conquest of Gujerat, he gave the title Fatehpur, 'City of Victory', to this place. And, here in 1569, prince Salim, the future Emperor Jehangir was born to Akbar's Hindu wife, Jodhabai, affectionately called Maryam Zamani, or Mary of the World.

The palace city with its various accompanying well-planned houses and offices, is one of the most beautiful monuments of the world, a prefabricated town, unique in the 16th century for being conceived and built according to a comprehensive plan. It took eleven years to complete, but, as though the enlightened will of the Emperor had left nothing to chance, the various palaces, the halls of private and public audience, the *hamams*, the mint, the stables, the gardens and the *baradaris*, were all constructed in a design of marvellous perfection on the ridge of Sikri. The white marble tomb of Salim Chisti stands in the courtyard of the great mosque, lending the courtyard, by comparison, an amplitude which is a marvel of architectural design of all time. And, after the victory in Khandesh, in 1601, Akbar got erected the Buland Darwaza, the biggest gateway in the world, and surely one of the finest achievements of Indian architectural art.

In many ways, the building of Fatehpur Sikri synthesised the various strains of Akbar's eclectic genius. For years, he gathered around it, all those creative men of his time through whom he could explore the possibilities of higher orders of truth and realisation. The Emperor had never allowed the life of action to obviate his intellectual pursuits. After a ten or eleven hours working day, he would call men of learning together to discuss with them the approaches of various religions and philosophies towards truth. He had first initiated debates on Muslim theology. Disgusted by the bigotry of the Mullas, he called Hindu, Jain, Christian and Parsee divines to his court, to talk to the Muslims. Of course, each of the protagonists sought to convert the Emperor to his particular faith. But Akbar had a shrewd suspicion that although each religion had many beautiful things in it, they were all one-sided. And he himself pondered deeply on fundamental questions of life and death. "Discourses on Philosophy", he once said, "have such an attraction for me that they distract me from all else and I have forcibly to restrain myself from listening to them lest the necessary duties of the hour be neglected." And he had many important books from

the classical languages translated into Persian, so that these could be read to him for his instruction.

It is likely that, through this special interest in comparative theology, he founded his own synthetic religion, Din-i-Ilahi, which was specially meant to reconcile his Hindu and Muslim subjects. This innovation also supplied the basis of Abul Fazal's theory which the Emperor obviously shared with his adviser: 'that the intellect of the just king becomes the sole source of legislation, thereby uniting spiritual and temporal authority in the Emperor.'

It is difficult to sum up the intensity and variety of the interests of a many-sided genius like Akbar. The title 'great' often affixed to his name is probably the most deserved in our history. But not only was this man an original legislator, and theorist of statecraft, he recognised the contribution of the subtlest sensibilities and did, for the medieval period, what Asoka had done for the pre-Christian—a king not content with the mere formulation of ideals but one intent on realising these in actuality. The unity of India, in which he passionately believed, and the tolerant acceptance of the various faiths of the sub-continent, were to push history forward, until later bigotry and narrow mindedness broke the inheritance. Certainly, his role seems to be that of a superman, or a god, in comparison to the prigs and fools who were to follow.

The Jesuit father Monserate, who came from Goa to teach him the tenets of christianity, has left a pen-portrait of the Emperor which seems to suggest the personality:

'One could easily recognise, even at the first glance, that he is a king. . . . His forehead is broad and open, his eyes so bright and flashing, that they seem like sea shimmering in sunlight. . . . His expression is tranquil, serene and open, full also of dignity, and, when he is angry, awful majesty.'

Before he died in 1605, Akbar had left the foundations of the Mughal style of architecture, which was to be developed by his successors in the next century.

The buildings he organised have, however, antecedents in the Muslim architecture of the previous Pathan Kings, and even beyond them, in the traditions of Central Asia and Persia, particularly in the tombs of the various kings. It is true that the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque in Delhi began Islamic architecture in India, but there was very little civil building of the Sultanates to compare with the Mughal forts, palaces and gardens. The Pathan tombs are mostly circular or polygonal—the central chamber being surrounded by an arch. Pierced, fretted windows are preferred, possibly deriving from the style practised at Pattadakal and Ellora. In fact, the whole plan has ancient origins, because the domes were built on traditional lines.

Of all the tombs, that of Firoz Shah, who died in 1388, stands out with its tile work, in clear yellow and pale green. This mausoleum is built with restraint and clear attention to the problem of lighting in the interior. The other tombs are buildings in a long tradition of rugged, strong Pathan architecture, distinguished by simplicity and the use of local materials to effect. In

palace architecture of the Islamic style of the pre-Mughal period, the buildings at Gwalior, Mandu and Bidar come to the fore.

Babur visited the palace of Gwalior, and, though he was not overenthusiastic, he noticed certain important features in it. The fortress palace was built by a Hindu Maharaja of the medieval period. Situated high on a scarped rock, its turreted walls were tiled, decorated with freezes of Banana trees and sacred geese in yellow, blue and green. The private apartments flank an open courtyard, derived from indigenous styles of layout; so do the heavy supporting pillars, and the friezes of dancing girls in the southern apartments.

As elsewhere in the Pathan buildings at Delhi and in the provinces, the native craftsmen seem to have imprinted their own talent on the Islamic forms demanded by their masters.

During the thirteen years of Humayun's exile, from India, Sultan Sher Shah built in the main style a mosque at Delhi and his own tomb at Sasseram, which were both outstanding creations. Another notable monument of this style, at that time of the main Pathan style, is the tomb of Saint Muhammad Gaus, beneath the fort of Gwalior, though its pierced screens are more delicate and extensive.

The Pathan style survived in the tomb of Akbar's foster brother, Azam Khan, of Behram Khan's son Khan-i-Khanan, built in Delhi, in the reign of Shahjahan.

Naturally, the Mughal style grows out of the Pathan elements, but is recognisably different because of the greater use of pierced screen and the use of marble, as well as increasing display of tile works, and the overhanging dome of brick and rubble core cased in marble.

The accounts of Abul Fazal about the passionate addiction of Akbar to the arts, gives some clue to the fact that he recognised the elements of the old tradition and tried to create a new style.

Apart from the Pathan buildings, the Emperor had also seen some of the Hindu architecture of Rajputana, and, as in state-craft and other sectors of his personal life, so in the buildings patronised by him, he tried to create a synthesis of Muslim and Hindu elements, later even introducing such Christian-European influences as he could absorb.

In many ways, the tomb of his father Humayun in Delhi marks the transition from the Pathan style to the Mughal. The use of marble suddenly strikes the eye. The Hindus had access to this material in Rajputana, but had not used it so extensively. The Emperor's mother, Gul-Badan Begum, who actively supervised the building of the tomb over her husband's remains, was obviously in consultation with her enlightened son.

The Emperor was, however, possessed of many other ideas which caught hold of him during his campaigns. Like a true aesthete, he saw the beauty of the red sandstone as it glows like fire in the sunlight. And the most distinctive part of the transition further from the use of buff stone and plaster by the Pathans, is the choice, by Akbar, of the flaming rocks so easily accessible near Delhi and Agra.

And it is this reliance on red sandstone, as well as the discreet blending of the Hindu style minarets and Baradaris, with the Islamic tradition of measured geometrical design, that integrates considerations of space, scale and proportion into the model city of Fatehpur Sikri. The basic concept of architecture, that is to say, the function of a building, dominates all the constructions on this hill. And the poetry is in the inter-relations of the houses, rather than in the decorative intention. Thus, if the Buland Darwaza stands out above other buildings, scattered on the ridge with an artless art, it is not because this main gateway was to advertise glory of the Emperor so much as because it was to be the portal of the marble Mausoleum of Salim Chisti and the giant mosque behind. The structural forms emerged almost as an inevitable by-product of the purposes for which each building was designed. Even the character of the various personalities, who were to reside in the houses, was taken into consideration. For instance, the apartments of Birbal's palace and the mahal of Maryam-Zamani (Akbar's Queen—Jodhabai) supply a contrast in their opulence, with the purity of the house designed for Abul Fazal and Faizi, and the grand little palace given to Raja Todar Mal.

The same insistence on purpose is indicated in the frescoes in Maryam-Zamani's palace. The Emperor might have seen the wall decorations in Rajput households, or the Queen may have wished to have such decorations in her rooms, but it is quite clear that Akbar considered painting as a part of architecture. At first, the house, then its interior decoration, and, later, illuminated manuscripts, which are to embellish the hours of leisure.

And, from this point of view, it becomes quite possible to understand how Akbar, in the midst of his multifarious occupations and interests, could give such intimate personal interest to the work of his painters, as to see their creations every week, dispense awards and titles and encourage them with criticism.

Abul Fazal lists the names of the hundred and four painters, who actively worked in the ateliers of the Emperor. Some of them even accompanied him on his forced marches and hunts, presumably to make action pictures. And the ones who stayed behind were to produce those hundreds of illustrations for the important histories and classics from the *Hamza-Namah* to *Kalila-wa-Dimnah* which were the glory of the distinctive early Mughal art of India.

Sculpture was no part of the Islamic tradition, but, as a near infidel, Akbar went as far as he could in stimulating fine carvings. In Birbal's Mahal is the exquisite festoon-like carved pillar, derived from the Hindu tradition, but put so meaningfully in this palace as to carry complete conviction. Again, in the carving of the *Jalis*, in the marble tomb of Salim Chisti, built in 1591, the Emperor made a complete innovation in the realm of Indo-Islamic architecture. The traceries and ribbon work show the concentration on detail through which the Emperor was experimenting to see how far he could admit decoration in a building. And, curiously, here it is just right and not

overdone, as it was to be in the tomb of Itmad-ud-Daula, under Jehangir, and in the feminine style which developed under Shahjahan.

The culmination of Akbar's experiments in building is achieved in the week-end house-cum-tomb which Akbar began in the evening of his life but which was finished after his death by Jehangir in 1612. This mausoleum shows the combination of all the gifts which constituted the Emperor's temperament. The layout of the structure, in a beautiful garden, with lovely trees, on which the parrots still scream with joy and under

which the wild deers roam, was a proper background for rest. The idea of the harmonious fusion of marble with the massive red sandstone achieves, by the dominant use of Hindu motifs, obviously owed to Akbar. The polychrome inlay and the tile work inhering into the whole ostentatiously seem to be due to Jehangir's preferences. The darkness of the main vault, however, gives depth and tragedy to the tomb of a man, whose passing away must have seemed, even then, like the death of the generation, which fought valiantly for life and for a new creative order.

Extracts from the Ain-I-Akbari Relating to Buildings

"Regulations for house-building in general are necessary; they are required for the comfort of the army, and are a source of splendour for the Government. People that are attached to the world will collect in towns, without which there would be no progress. Hence His Majesty plans splendid edifices, and dresses the work of his mind and heart in the garment of stone and clay. Thus mighty fortresses have been raised, which protect the timid, frighten the rebellious, and please the obedient. Delightful villas, and imposing towers have also been built. They afford excellent protection against cold and rain, provide for the comforts of the princesses of the Harem, and are conducive to that dignity which is so necessary for worldly power."

"Everywhere also serais have been built, which are the comfort of travellers and the asylum of poor strangers. Many tanks and wells are being dug for the benefit of men and the improvement of the soil. Schools and places of worship are being founded, and the triumphal arch of knowledge is newly adorned. His Majesty has enquired into every detail connected with this department, which is so difficult to be managed, and requires such large sums. He has passed new regulations, kindled the lamp of honesty, and put a stock of practical knowledge into the hands of simple and inexperienced men."

On the Wages of Labourers

"Gilkars (workers in lime), first class workmen, 7d.; second class, 6d.; third class 5d."

"Sangtarash (stone-masons). The tracer gets 6d. for each gaz; one who does plain work, 5d. A labourer employed in quarries gets for every man he breaks, 22j."

"Carpenters, first class, 7d.; second class, 6d.; third class, 4d.; fourth class, 3d.; fifth class, 2d. For plain job-work, a first class carpenter gets 1d. 17j. for one gaz; second class for one gaz, 1d. 6j.; third class for one gaz, 21j."

"Pinjarah saz (lattice work and wicker work). First when the pieces are joined (fastened with strings), and the interstices be dodecagonal 24d. for every square gaz; when the interstices form twelve circles, 22d.; when hexagonal, 18d.; when Ja'fari (or rhombus-like, one diagonal being vertical the other horizontal), 16d.; when shatranji (or square fields, as on a chess board), 12d. for every square gaz."

"Secondly when the work is ghair wacli (the sticks not being fastened with strings, but skilfully and tightly interwoven), for first class work, 48d. per square gaz; for second class, 40d."

"Arrahkash (one who saws beams). For job-work, per square gaz 2.1/2d. if sisaun wood; if nazhu wood, 2d. A labourer employed for the day, 2d. There are three men for every saw, one above, two below."

"Bildars (bricklayers), first class, daily 3.1/2d.; second class daily, 3d. If employed by the job, for building fortress walls with battlements, 4d. per gaz; for laying foundations, 2.1/2d.; for all other walls, 2d. For digging ditches, 1/2d. per gaz."

"The gaz of a labourer contains 32 tassujes."

"Chah-kan, or well-diggers, first class workmen, 2d. per gaz; second class, per gaz, 1.1/2d.; third class, per gaz, 1.1/2d."

"Ghautah khur, or well-divers. They clean wells. In the cold season, 4d. per diem; in the hot season, 3d. By the job, 2R. for cleaning a depth of one gaz."

"Khisht tarash, or tile-makers, for 100 moulds, smoothened, 8d."

"Surkhikob (pounders of old bricks), 1.1/2d. for a heap of 8 mans."

"Glass-cutters, 100d. per gaz."

"Bamboo-cutters, 2d. per diem."

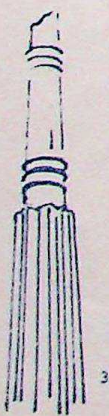
"Chapparband, or thatcher, 3d. per diem; if done by the job, 24d. for 100 gaz."

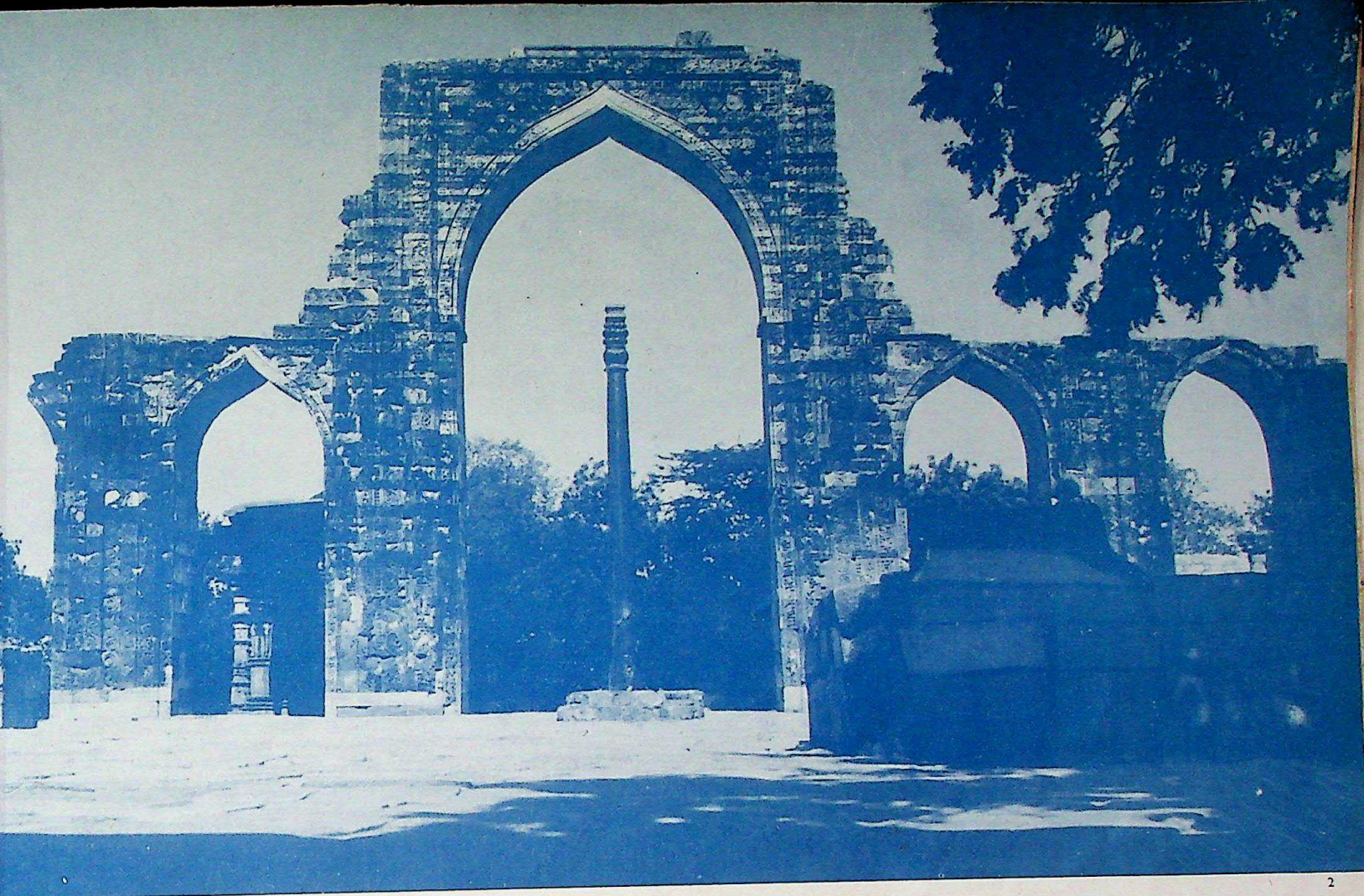
"Patalband (vide p. 224) 1d. for 4 gaz."

"Lakhirah. They varnish reeds, &c., with lac; wages, 2d. per diem."

"A'bkash, or water-carriers. First class, 3d. per diem. Second class do., 2d. Such water-carriers as are used for furnishing house builders, with water for mortar and quicklime, get 2d. per diem."

- 1. *Qutb-Minar, built by Qutb-ud-din Aibak as a victory tower, A.D. 1200.*
- 2. *Quwwat-ul-Islam Mosque, Screen, Delhi, c. A.D. 1199.*
- 3. *Minar at Ghazni, 11th Century.*



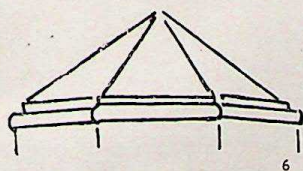
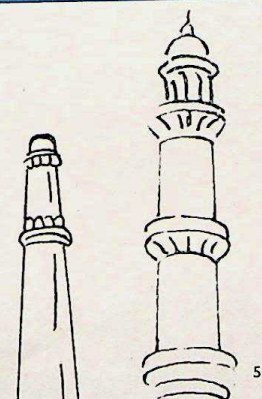


2

I. Architecture

1. Background of Indo-Islamic Architecture

by John Terry



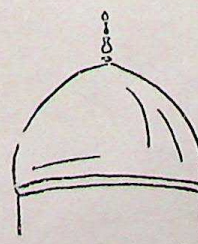
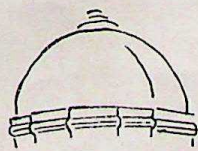
4. *Minar at Khirki Mosque, Delhi, 14th Century.*

5. *Minar at Akbar's Tomb, Sikandra, A.D. 1607.*

6. *Dome of Sultan Ghari, Delhi, A.D. 1231.*

7. *Dome of Allai Darwaza, Delhi, A.D. 1310.*

8. *Dome of Lodi Tomb, Delhi, A.D. 1500.*



1200-1246 Establishment of Delhi Kingdom under the Slave Kings.

1290-1320 The Khilji Dynasty.

1320-1413 The Tughlak Dynasty.

1399- Timurid invasions and capture of Delhi.

1414-1526 Sayyid and Lodi period: end of the Delhi Sultanate.

1526-1540 Foundation of Mughal empire by Babur and Humayun.

1540-1555 Humayun in exile and government in hands of Afghan family of Sher Shah Suri.

1555-1605 Humayun's return and reign of Akbar the great.

Utilisation of existing temples for mosques, followed by tentative attempts at producing Islamic forms.

Rapid development of technique (with foreign help) and introduction of true arch form.

Greater building activity in later part of period but in plainer fashion than before for economic reasons.

Cessation and migration of craftsmen.

Restricted activity for economic reasons after Timurid invasions. Technical help from provinces.

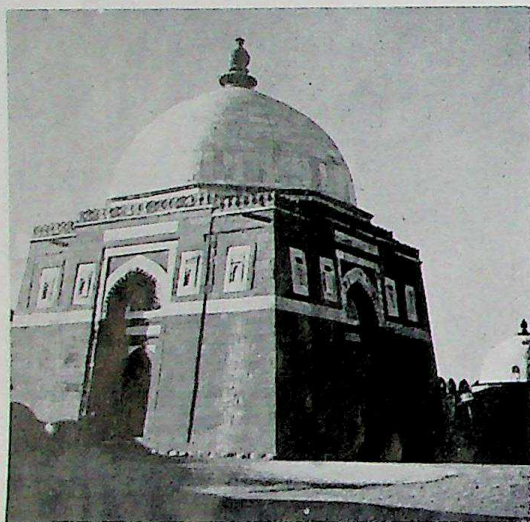
Little building, as the main effort was directed to empire development.

Much building, both at centre and outside. Advances in technique and increased use of fine materials.

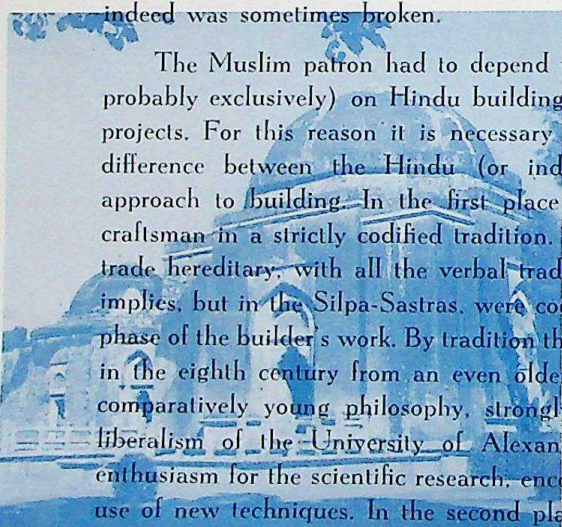
Great activity: Humayun's tomb sets standard for orthodox work, but greatest achievement is in synthesis of Hindu and Islamic forms.



9



10



11

12

9. *Tomb of Iltutmish, Interior, Delhi, A.D. 1235.*
10. *Tomb of Ghias-ud-din Tughlak, Tughlakabad, A.D. 1325.*
11. *Tomb of Firuz Shah, Delhi, Hauz Khas, A.D. 1370.*
12. *Purana Quilla, Postern-gate, Delhi, c. A.D. 1545.*

The development of Indo-Islamic architecture in India covers a period of six hundred years: from the first vigorous clumsy buildings of the Slave Kings in the thirteenth century, to the final overblown flutterings of the Court of Oudh in the early eighteen hundreds. During practically the whole of this time the centre of the Muslim world in the Indian sub-continent was the city and environments of Delhi; and although very distinctive developments took place elsewhere, it is to the Court of Delhi that we return again and again. All building depends to some extent on patronage and of Indo-Islamic building this was particularly true. Muslim rulers governed a predominantly non-Muslim people and (except in certain parts of the country) there was little popular need for specifically Islamic building types. So what was built in the Muslim tradition was built more directly than usual for the princes and the nobility: and even where Muslim folk-art traditions have appeared, they are usually found to be rooted in the production of luxury goods, rather than in the manufacture of daily necessities. I emphasise this point to explain the importance of developments in Delhi, the seat of Muslim power in India, even though the political link between the centre and the remoter parts of the Muslim empire became at times very weak—and indeed was sometimes broken.

The Muslim patron had to depend very largely (in early days, probably exclusively) on Hindu building craftsmen to carry out his projects. For this reason it is necessary to clarify the fundamental difference between the Hindu (or indigenous) and the Islamic approach to building. In the first place the Hindu builder was a craftsman in a strictly codified tradition. Not only was the building trade hereditary, with all the verbal tradition behind it, which that implies, but in the Silpa-Sastras, were codified rules governing every phase of the builder's work. By tradition these compilations were made in the eighth century from an even older verbal tradition; Islam, a comparatively young philosophy, strongly affected by the classical liberalism of the University of Alexandria and by the Arabian enthusiasm for the scientific research, encouraged experiment and the use of new techniques. In the second place Hindu building had its origins in wooden structural forms, and even though mason's work was widely used by the second century B.C. traditions of carpentry still survived. Whether for this reason or for some metaphysical objection to the use of a form not at rest within itself, the Hindu builder was most averse to the use of the arch, while the arch and dome were the keynote of Islamic building. Early Muslim patrons went extravagant lengths to achieve arched forms from the hands of workmen who were ignorant of the structural problems involved and unhappy in experiment. There were other deep differences. The contrast between the small dim individual worship cell of the Hindu temple and the large space necessary for community worship in the mosque; the Hindu conception of a building as a solid scaffold for the sculptural forms covering it, and the Muslim insistence on structural forms emphasised but not concealed by the decorative detail; the Hindu skill in plastic expression of natural (particularly human) forms, and the orthodox Muslim dislike of anything but conventionalised details.

With so many differences of a fundamental sort between patrons and builders it is not surprising that a satisfactory synthesis was slow in coming. When it was finally reached in the sixteenth century under the Emperor Akbar the great, it was due less to natural evolution than to the personality of the prince himself.



12



2. Beginnings of Mughal Architecture

If there had been some mingling of Middle Eastern and Indian traditions, in Indo-Islamic Architecture before the Mughals, it was mostly unconscious. But in the construction of the tomb of Humayun, there was a deliberate attempt at synthesis.

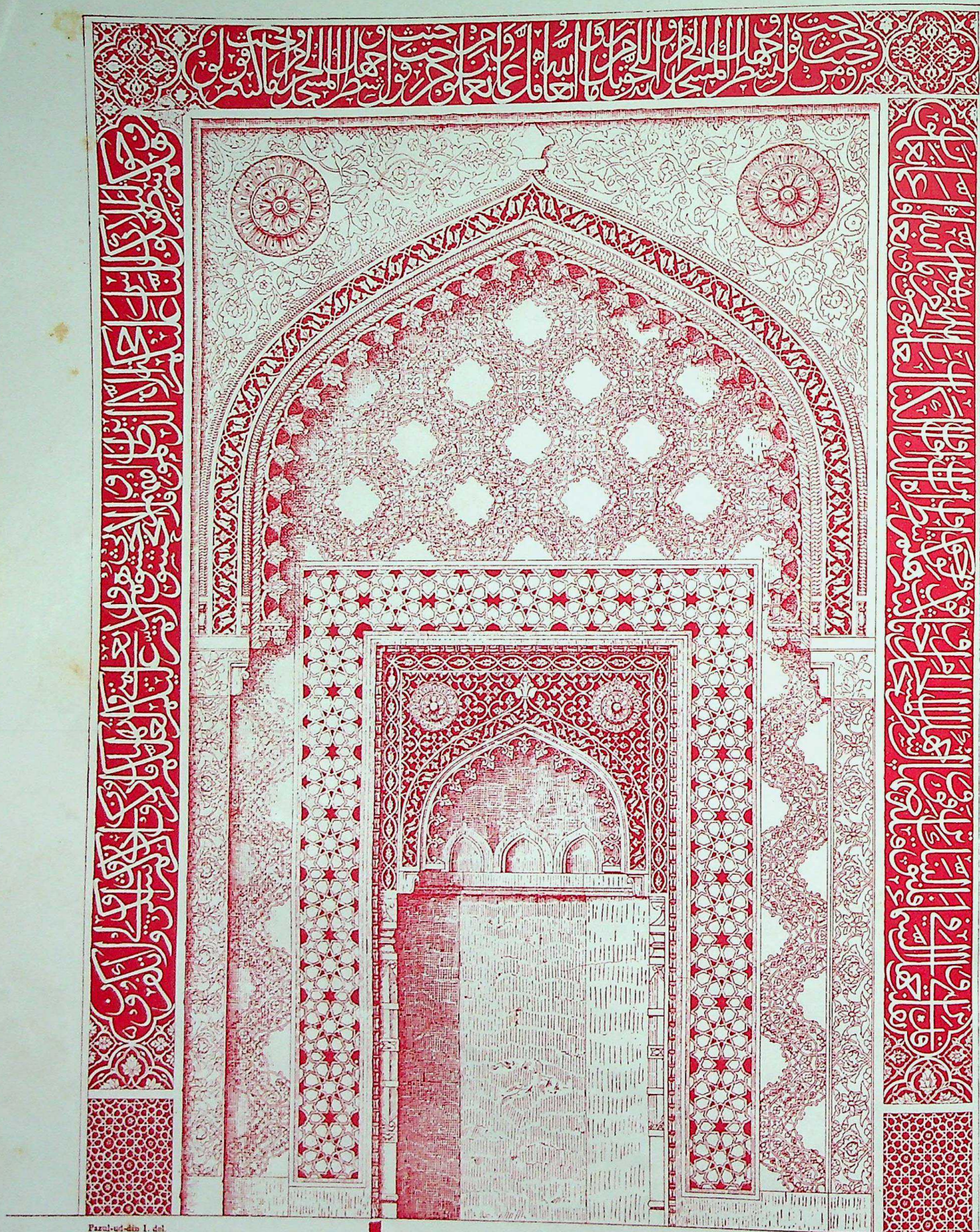
The mausoleum was constructed under the direct supervision of Humayun's widow, Haji Begum, from the year 1564 onwards. It is conceivable therefore, that her young son, the Emperor Akbar, constantly advised her while the building was in progress.

The queen mother seems to have employed a Persian architect Mirza Ghiyas, to plan the whole edifice, and she was doubtless strongly obsessed with similar buildings she had seen in Persia, where she had shared her husband's exile. From the ruins of Arab Sarai of that time, near the tomb, it is likely that a number of middle Eastern and Persian craftsmen seem to have been of native origin, and their hand is clearly visible in the structure which is, as Percy Brown puts it, 'an Indian interpretation of a Persian conception.'

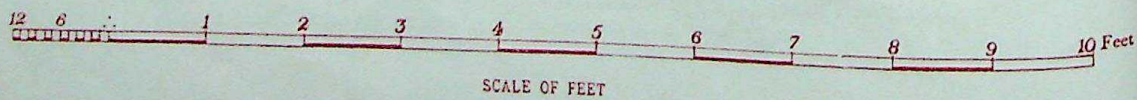
The shape of the dome and its construction, as also the arched alcoves, and the complex of rooms and corridors in the interior arrangements, obviously owe themselves to Persia. Red stone masonry, however, and its artistic combination with the exquisite marble, and the fanciful kiosks with elegant cupolas derive from the talented Indian workmanship.

Apart from the majesty and the grace the combination of the Indian stone mason's art with the ability to use the mortar of the Persians, created a new style, orthodox in concept and yet revolutionary in technique, which was to lead to further more brilliant innovations under Akbar, Jehangir and Shahjahan.

1. *Humayun's Tomb, Delhi, A.D. 1564.*



Farul-ud-din 1. del.



1. Fatehpur Sikri—Jami Masjid:
The principal Mihrab was erected in A.D. 1571.
The west wall of the mosque was cut up by Mihrabs,
the principal one in the centre of the interior face
of the wall points towards Mecca.

3. Mughal Architecture: Synthesis of Hindu and Islamic forms

Fatehpur Sikri

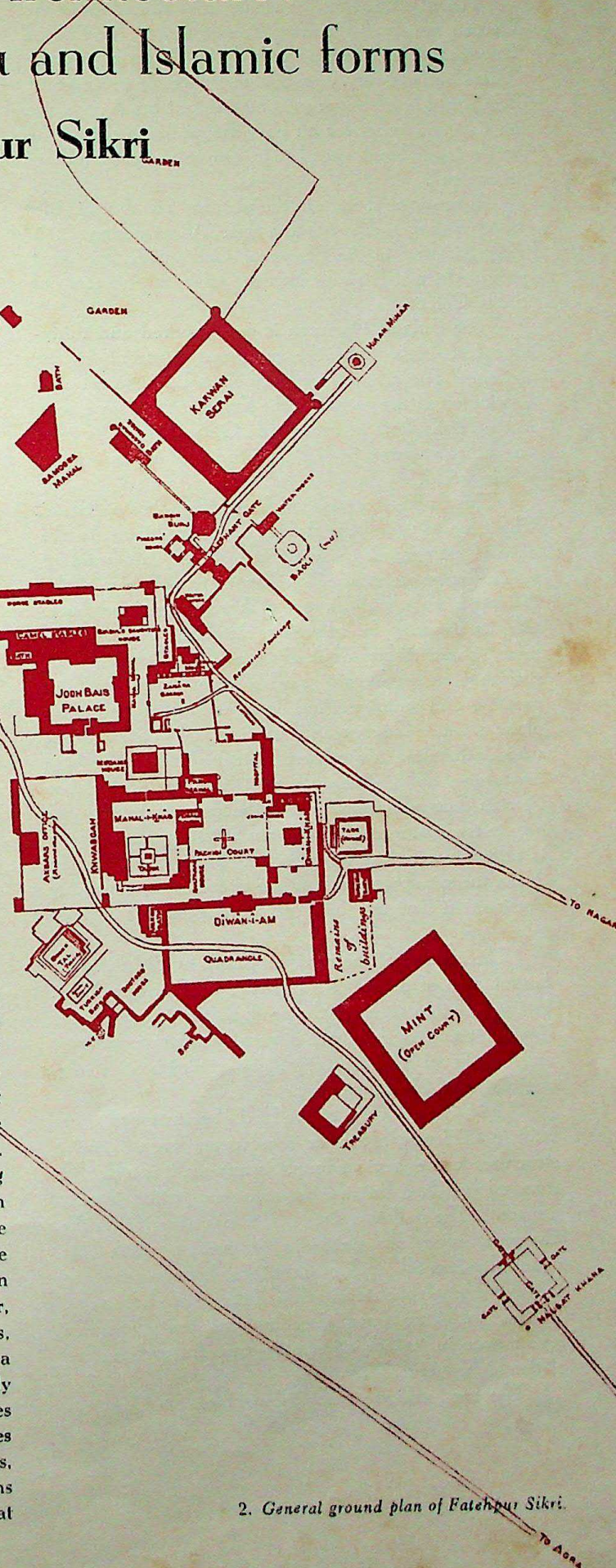
There are few souvenirs from the past architecture of India of the medieval period which compel the sense of wonder as the model city of Fatehpur Sikri, built by Akbar, the great Mughal.

Abul Fazal, the chronicler of this Emperor, wrote in the celebrated *Ain-i-Akbari*: "The Majesty plans splendid edifices and dresses the work of his mind and heart in the garments of stone and clay. He also plans mighty fortresses which protect the timid, frighten the rebellious and please the loyal subjects."

This gives a clue to the mind of the Emperor who conceived the master plan.

There are many reasons which completely justify the choice of the site of Sikri for the building of the 'City of Victory.' The ridge on which it was to be placed, overlooked the plain where Akbar's grandfather, Babur, had given battle to Rana Sangha, the heroic Rajput prince, who defied the first Mughal conqueror. Akbar, who was fond of hunting must have ventured out often on horseback towards this village and sought inspiration from his ancestor's victory on that field. Then, during the middle part of his career, finding himself without a heir, he sought out a muslim holy man, Salim Chisti, who lived in Sikri. This saint foretold the birth of a son, who was destined to succeed the Emperor. Akbar began to associate with this place a good omen for his future. And, with an impetuosity, characteristic of him, he ordered a city to be built. A versatile genius, into which the Emperor had assimilated much knowledge, worldly good sense and an enlightened will, was brought to bear on the whole scheme.

Doubtless there were consultations with the artisans, prolonged conferences in which every detail was discussed. And, the idea of pre-fabrication was evolved for the first time in the history of Indian architecture. Says Father Monserrate in his memoirs: "It appears that all the materials were brought complete and ready to the place where they were to be used". There are paintings which show the Emperor, inspecting the laying of the red sandstone slabs brought from Rajasthan quarries. And each building in the seven mile circuit of the hill bears the stamp of Akbar's knowledge of the individual character of the person or the institution which was to be housed in it. So, according to Jehangir, within fifteen years, 'a hill infested by wild beasts, became a refined city, with all the requirements of a capital'. Two miles long and one mile broad, and roughly rectangular, surrounded by massive walls on three sides and by an artificial lake on the fourth, various edifices grew up, a great mosque with seminaries, palaces, audience rooms, offices, all arranged with gardens, fountains and Baradaris, each stone adjusted so that



2. General ground plan of Fatehpur Sikri.

it seems to speak eloquently of the noble intentions of the master builder for the whole grand plan.

About 1601, after the victory over Khandesh in the Deccan, was built the magnificent gateway, the Buland Darwaza. On it are inscribed the following words: "Jesus, son of Mary, on whom may there be peace, said: The world is a bridge; pass over it, but build no house on it. Who hopes for an hour, hopes for eternity. The world is an hour; spend it in prayer for what follows is unseen".

It seems as though in the maturest mood of his life, which was then drawing to a close, Akbar designed this lofty gateway to the House of God inside, the great mosque in which also stands the white marble tomb of Salim Chisti.

The Buland Darwaza is one hundred and thirty-four feet high, from the pavement in front of the entrance. The classic simplicity of its line is a rationalization of all the gateways the Emperor must have seen in the Hindu forts he conquered. Only, it is bigger than any other gateway in India or, for that matter, in the whole world.

The single storeyed marble mausoleum of Salim Chisti, on to which the Buland Darwaza opens, is like a pearl set against the plain red stone. This building was a first experiment of the Emperor in the use of the delicate marble, with its pure milk white and ivory hues, and its capacity for allowing chiselling of fine jalis, brackets and ribbon-work. Polished by the sun, Akbar probably realised, that marble also lends itself to painting and gilding. And he experimented further by placing, inside the cenotaph, an attractive wooden frame, whose pillars are in the finest Mother of Pearl. The total impression of this mausoleum is neither Arabic, nor Persian, but Akbari, which is the only name one can give to the synthesis of Hindu and Muslim motifs which is attempted in it. The arch, the dome, the tiles, the doors, the windows, and the size of the tomb, ostensibly Persian in origin, are yet unmistakably Hindu in design.

The ground of the mosque 438 ft. by 512 ft. is the largest area of any single structure in Fatehpur Sikri. It is not certain whether the zealous sunnis around the Emperor recognised that the dimensions, the proportions, and planes of the courtyard, are reminiscent of the courtyards of Hindu temples.

The Diwan-i-Khas, or the Hall of private audience, built in 1575 was, again an improvement on all similar structures in the previous forts. Seemingly, it is a double storeyed building, but the apparent conception is only apparent. The hall is a single lofty chamber which the Emperor used for intimate discussions with his counsellors, on all kinds of questions, from gun making to the care of elephants and the subtleties of philosophy. It vies with the finest buildings of the European renaissance in its addiction to purposeful architecture of the highest sensibility.

The most unique embellishment of the Diwan-i-

khas is his throne pillar. Like an inserted wine-cup in shape, it also looks somewhat like a lotus flower. People believe that the Emperor may have meant it to be Vishnu's symbolic pillar or an abstract tree of life. Certainly, Akbar seems to have preferred the shadow of this pillar, as he is said to have held court underneath this for long hours.

The five storeyed building called Panch Mahal is obviously a Hava Khana, or Air Palace, rationalised into the shape and form of a lovely palace, from the Baradaris of the Hindu kings. There are also Buddhist motifs absorbed in the structure of each storey, mounting on the one below in a graduated maze. The entire building is set off with small pigeon and parrot houses where the birds hummed or shrieked even as they sat or flew in their sepia and vivid green against the burning red stone.

Of the private houses, Birbal's palace stands out as a pure Hindu building of two storeys, with two Muslim domes on top. The lovely carvings on the ceilings and the walls, deriving from the Rajputs, in their atmosphere, are reminiscent 'of the touch,' as Percy Brown says, 'of hands which once raised Somnath near Mt. Abu'.

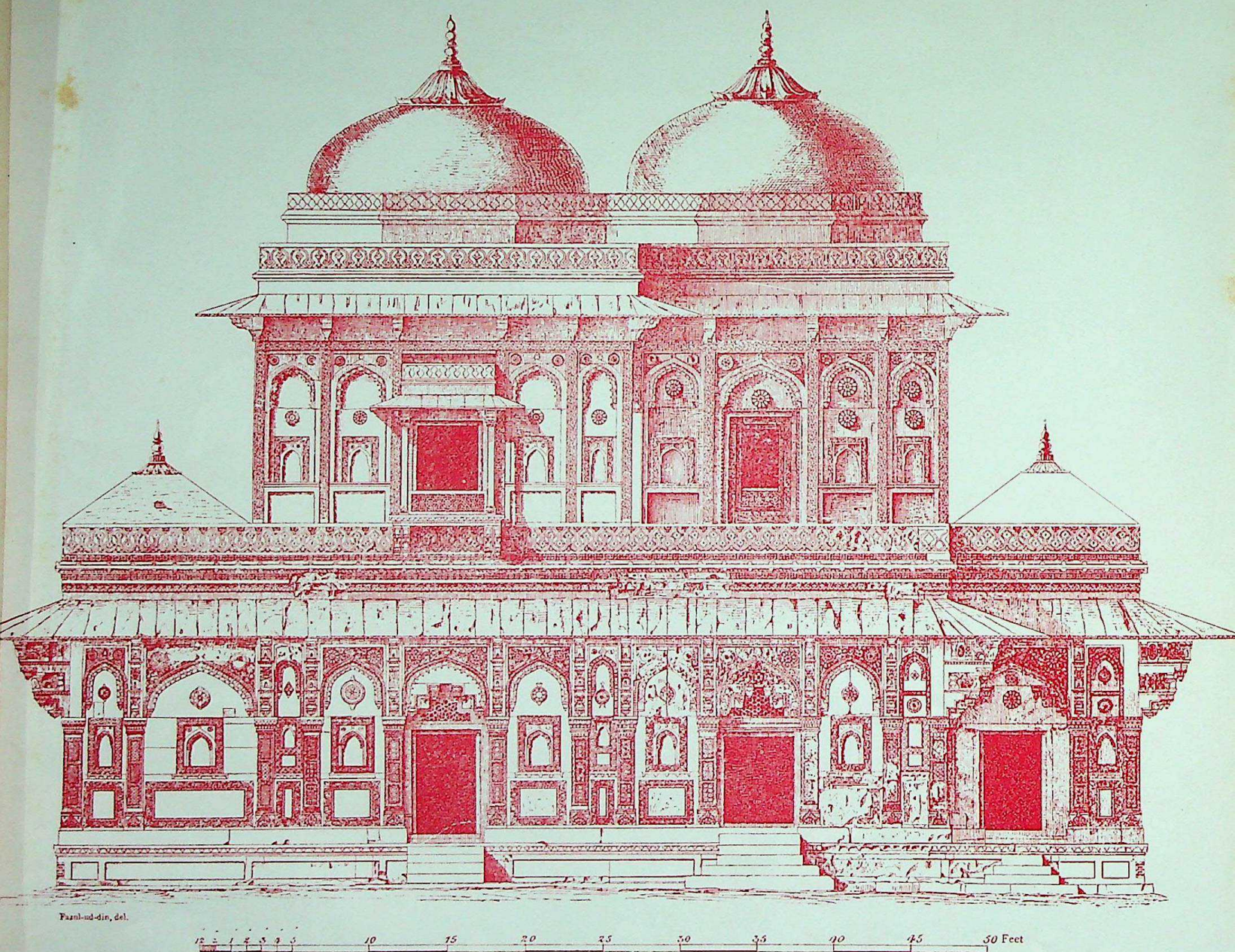
The Sufistic plainness of the house of the brothers, Abul Fazal and Faizi, was obviously designed for a different kind of temperament. Here structural qualities are dominant.

Among the buildings of the Imperial household, the most exquisite is the small palace of Maryam Zamani, with its frescoes on the walls, which are mixtures of the styles of Raphael's Sistine Madonna and the paintings of Bihzad.

In his own sleeping room, the Emperor ingeniously designed a large throne-like stone bed, raised from the floor by a few feet and open to a through draught from a window as its head and the open space at its feet. This feature was clearly borrowed from the peasant style bed frequent in Northern India and ideally suited to the extremes of hot and cold weather. The use of this kind of motif is symptomatic of the Emperor's commonsense attitude to structures, even as is the stuffing of most of the walls between red sandstone slabs with earth, in order to make the walls proof against the weather, for mud is a non-conductor of heat or cold.

The beauty of Fatehpur Sikri is in its dignity. The whole architecture is integral and the decorations are part of the structures. The craftsmanship is masterly in its exactitude. The materials are permanent and have lasted for 300 years almost intact. One can imagine the whole pageant of the great court, with its dynamic life force, moving in flashing visions, on foot or on horseback, the inspiration behind the creativeness of a whole age.

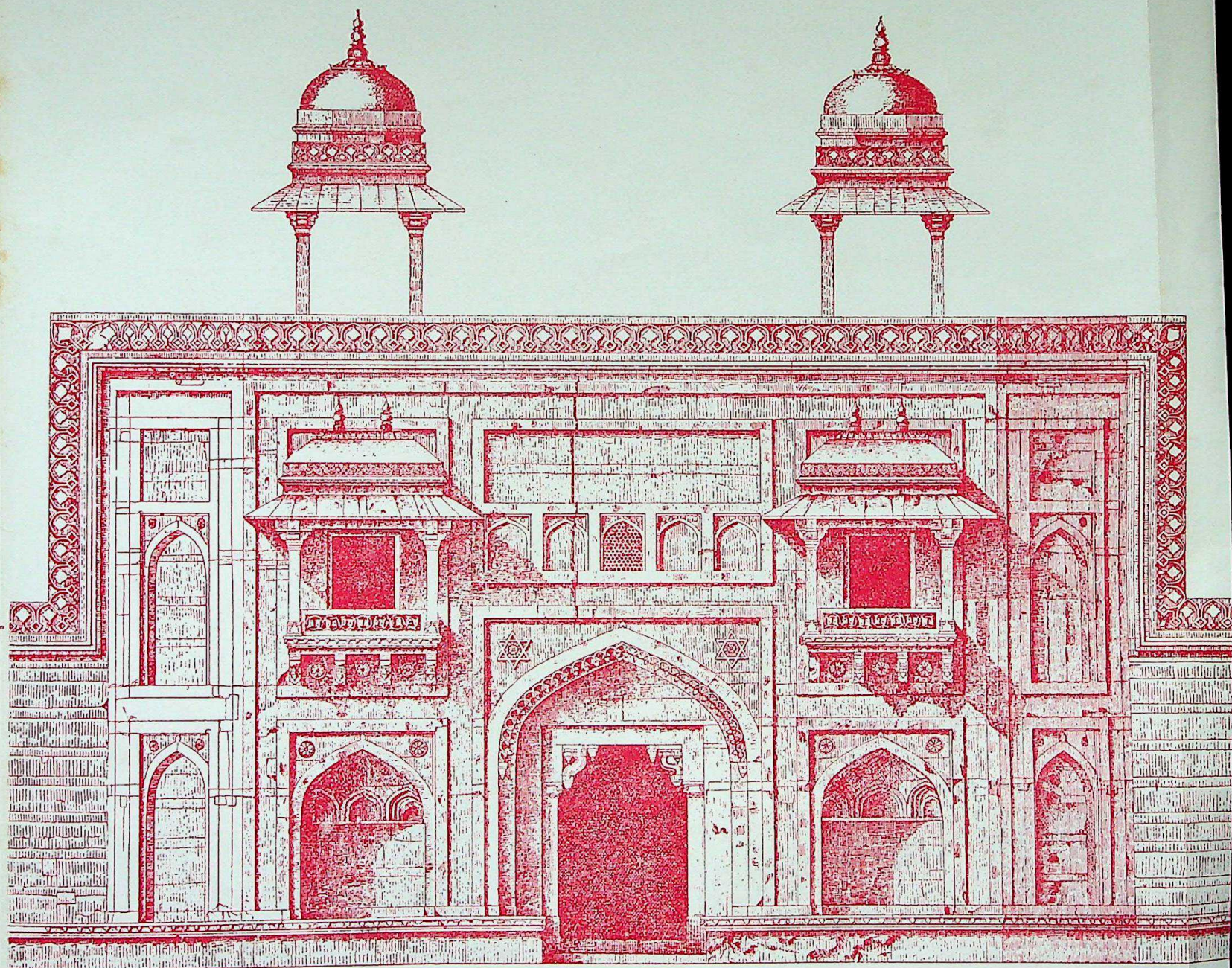
Fatehpur Sikri is somewhat reminiscent of Pompeii and of Versailles, but superior in the intellectual arrangements of its parts, and it stands out as one of the few early planned cities of the world—the truest monument to the heightened imagination of Akbar.



3. *Birbal's Palace.*

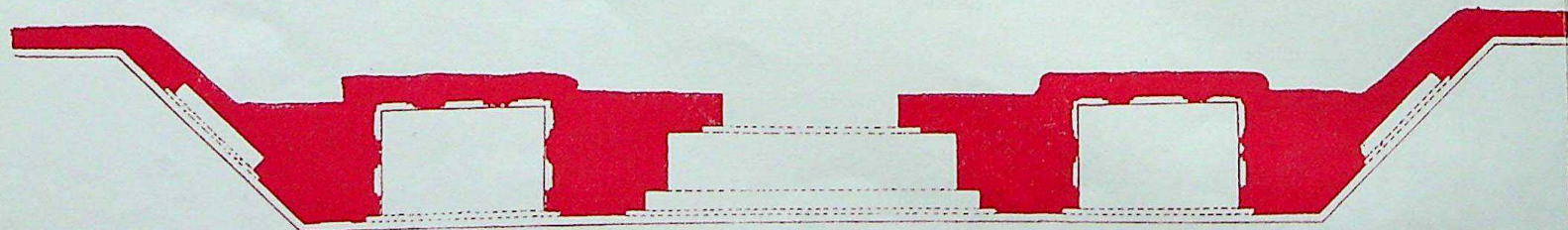
Fatehpur Sikri—Raja Birbal's Palace.

This was erected in A.D. 1571 by Raja Birbal for his daughter. The house is said to be the finest domestic building in the city. It is elaborately carved both inside and out. The building is entirely of red-stone except for the surface of the domes and porched roofs which are coated in cement.



Pazul-ud-din I. del.

Elevation.



Plan

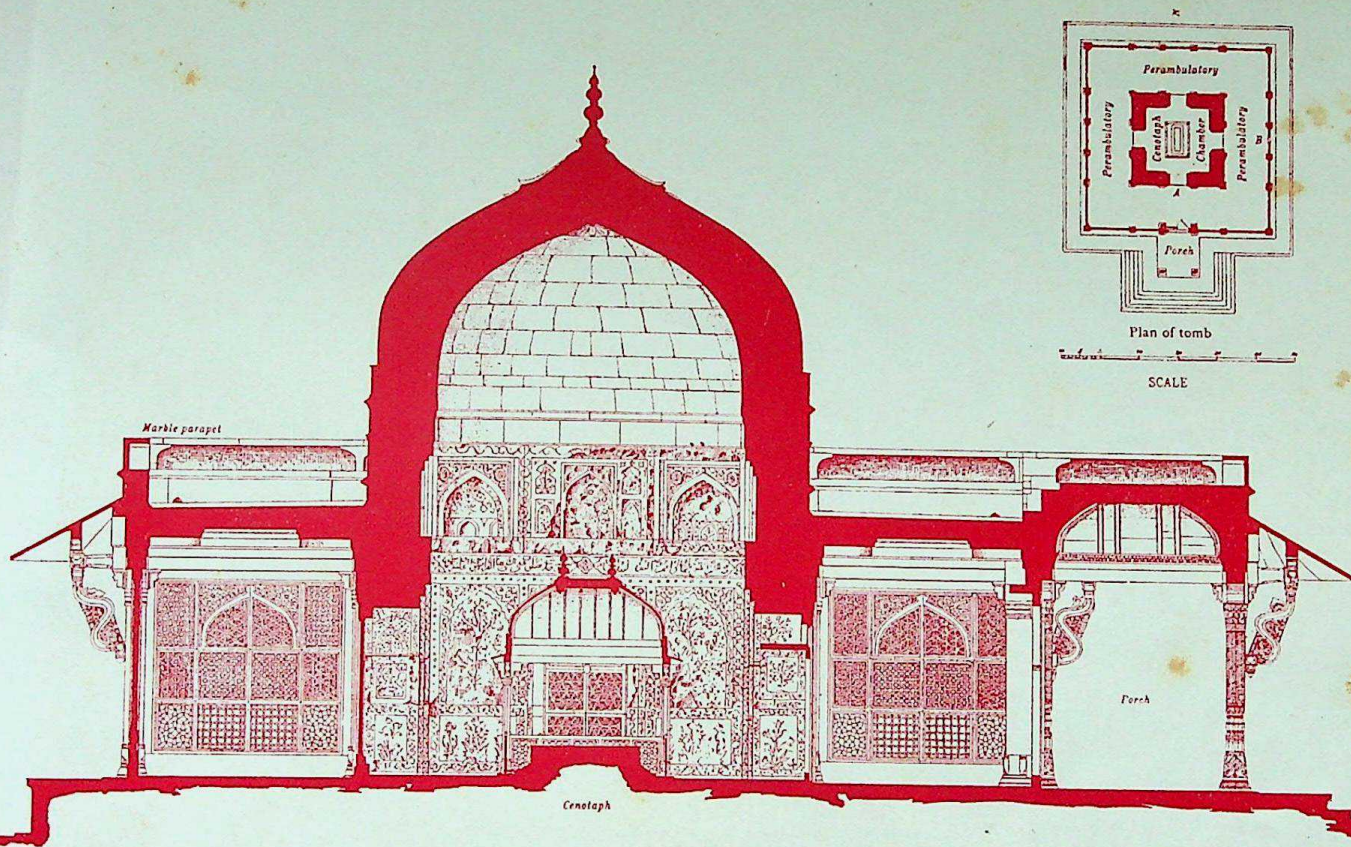
10 0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50 Feet

SCALE OF FEET

4. Jodh Bai's Palace.

Fatehpur Sikri—Jodh Bai's Palace.

This was erected about A.D. 1565. The building is red sand-stone. The simplicity of architecture here shows that it was one of the earliest palaces built in the city. On each side of the door were seats for the attendants.



5. *Salim Chisti's Tomb*

Fatchpur Sikri—Salim Chisti's Tomb (section through the tomb from North to South).

This was erected in A.D. 1581. The tomb is covered on the outside with white marble while the inner walls are of red sand-stone, coated with stucco. The dedo inside is of marble. The walls upto the springing of the dome are decorated with paintings. The screens are white marble. The canopy over the marble cenotaph is of wood, inlaid with mother of pearl. The ceilings are of white marble coated on the outside with cement to form the roof, sloping outside to drain the water. The actual tomb is in the crypt below the cenotaph chamber.



Fatehpur Sikri: The Mahal-i-Khas, Khwabgah. Detail of fresco upon the North Wall.



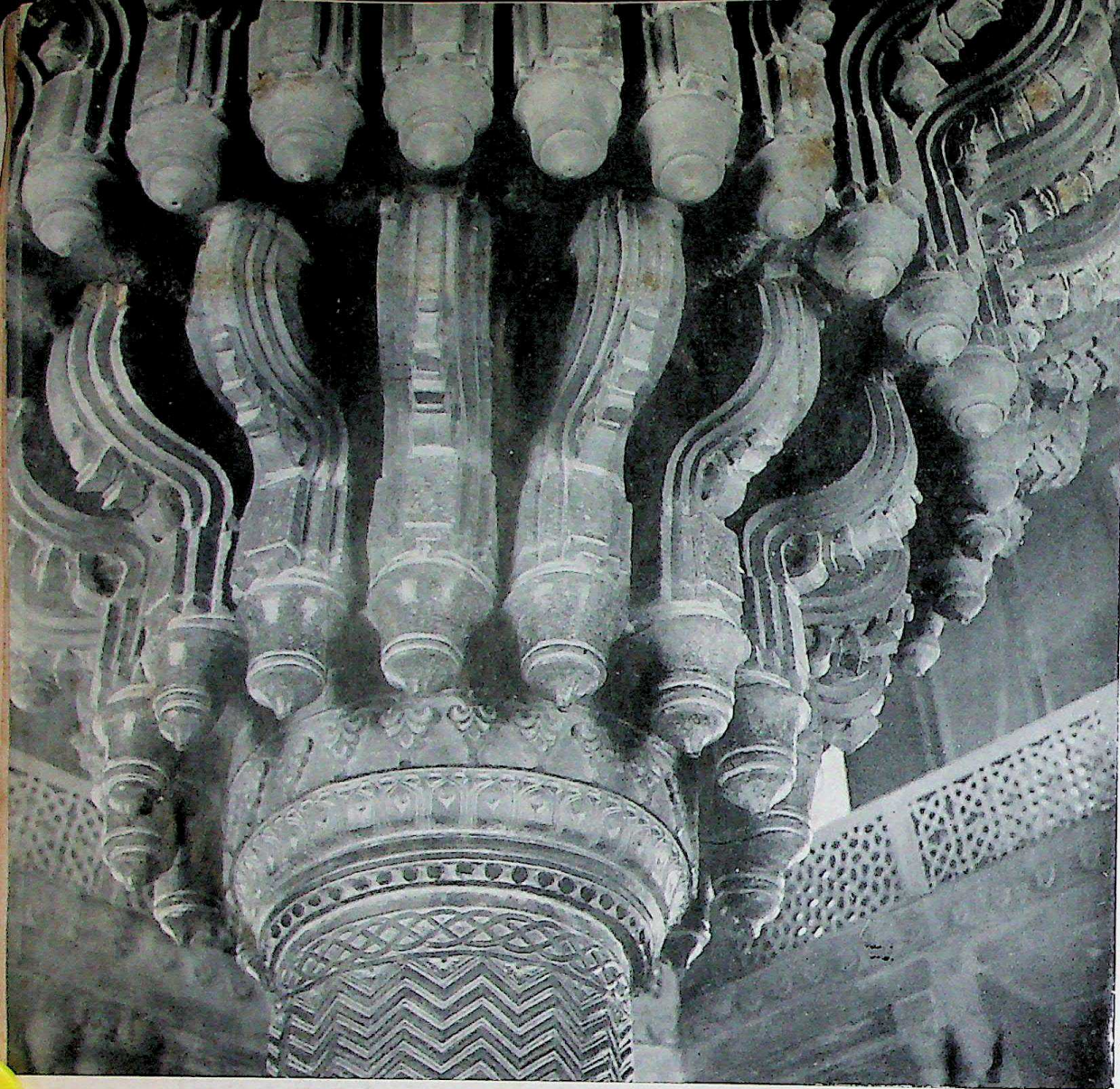
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7. Panch Mahal.

8. Panch Mahal, another view.

8

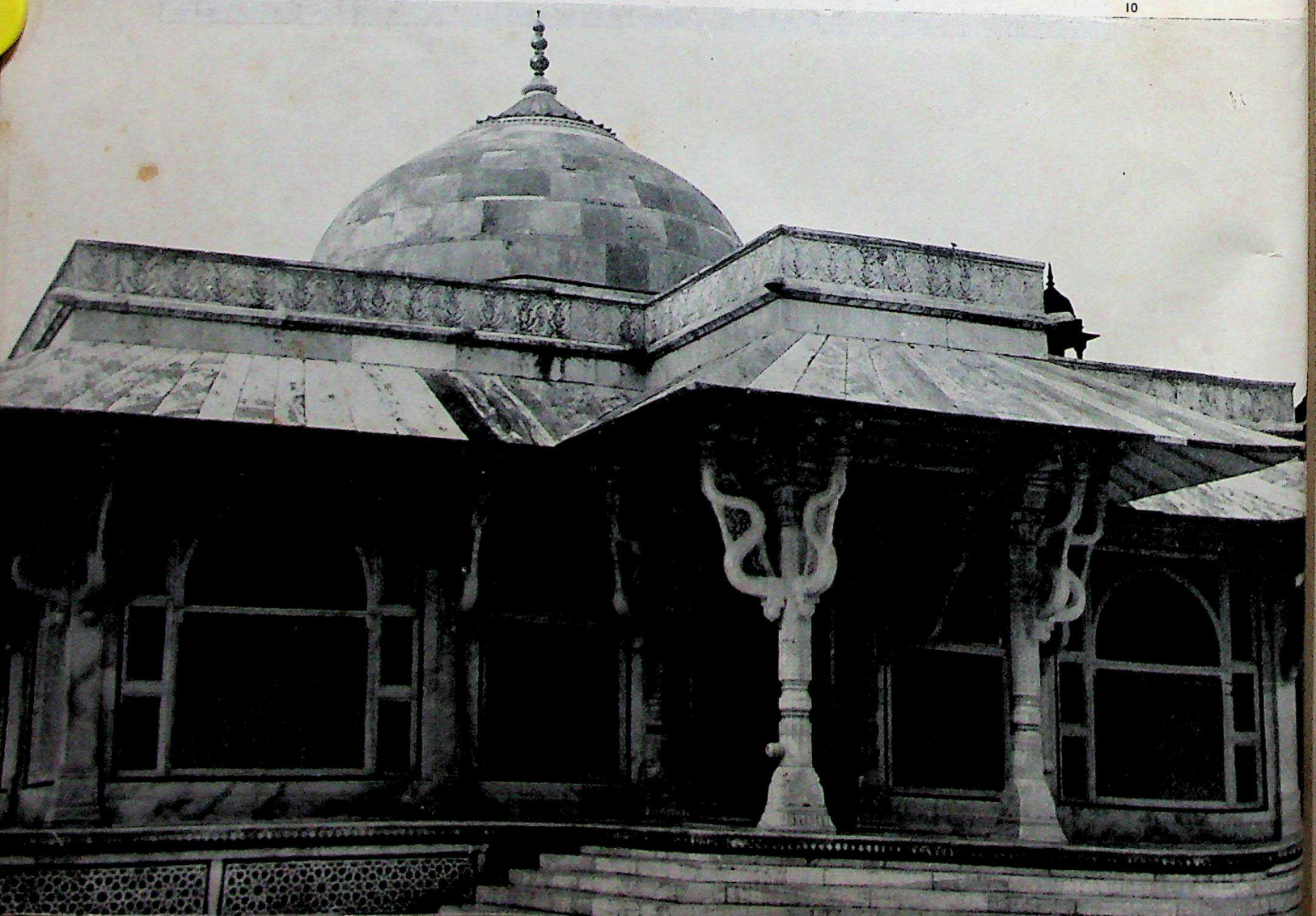


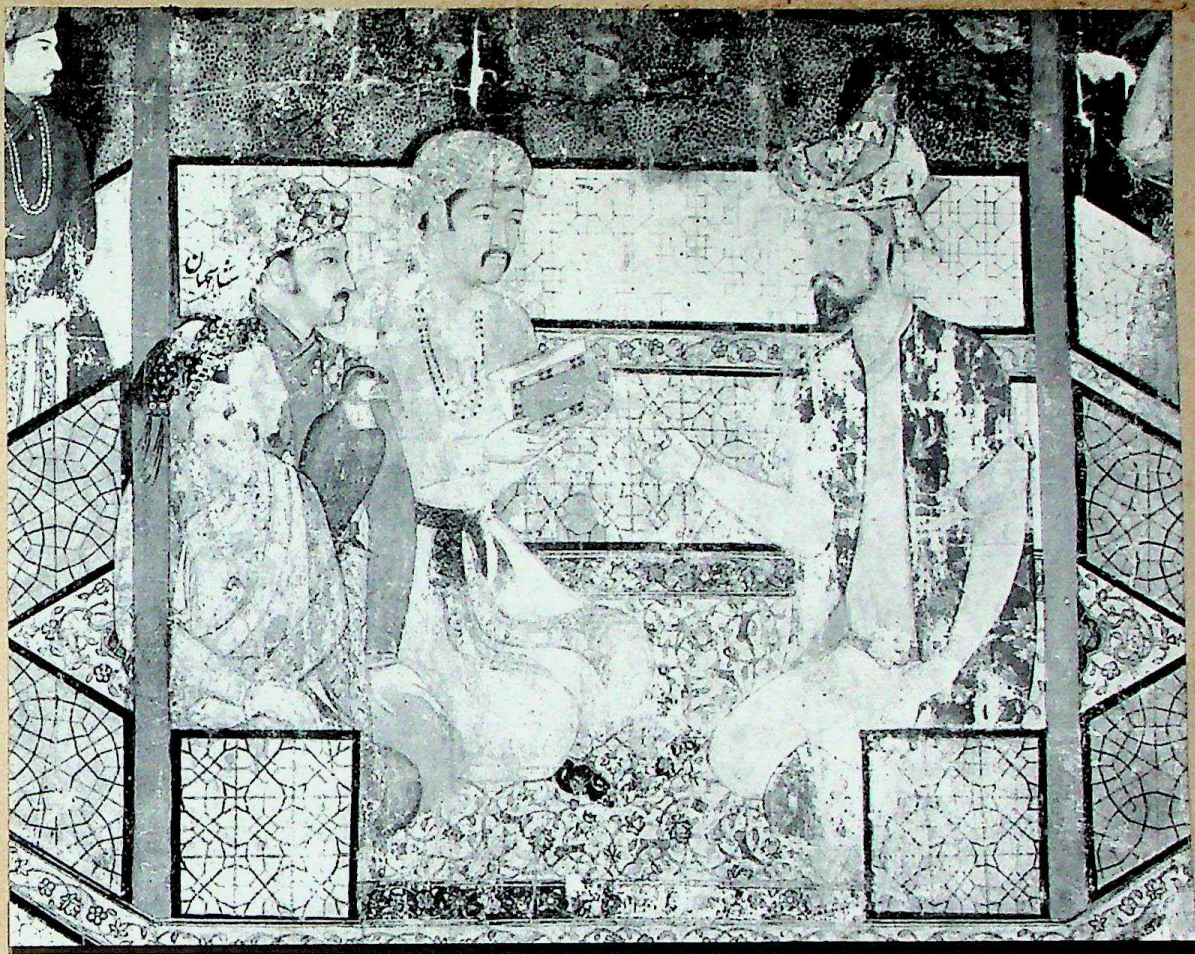


9. *Central Pillar, Diwan-i-Khas.*

10. *Tomb of Salim Chisti.*

10





*Princes from the house of Timur (Painted by Abdus Samad,
c. A.D. 1570. By Courtesy of British Museum.)*

II. Painting :

1. Introduction to the Study of Indo-Persian Painting

by Shahid Suhrawardy

It might appear strange that I have chosen for the title of this essay the obsolete term Indo-Persian, which has been rejected by almost all the historians of Indian art. The principal objection to it is due to the fact that its use might suggest that Mughal art was nothing more than merely a reflection of Indian and Persian art traditions, having no discrete existence of its own. Whilst in its maturer periods Mughal art did possess an individuality and formed by itself an organised unit, it is no slur on its later phases if we characterise its beginnings and the persistent direction of its revivalist inclinations as a striving after the transference of Persian conventions to an Indian setting. At its very outset, however, before the Persian and Indian elements had been organically transfused, it has a specific artistic flavour of its own, comparable to that of the verses of Amir Khusru before the emergence of Urdu. This early period is often described as a servile imitation of Persian models, but it appears as wrong to assert this as to say that there was nothing individual in the writings of those Indian poets who used the Persian language as their medium of expression. It is true that, compared to the brilliant achievements of Herat and even Isfahan, some of these early works do present schematic colour relations and a deplorable looseness of composition such as many centuries ago, the Hellenistic art of Gandhara did in contrast to the monuments of Greece and Asia Minor; but, as in the latter case, there are exceptions, notable not only for their intrinsic worth but as points of radiation of artistic influence. The works produced under Humayun and Akbar may be termed a colonial expression of Persian art, with all the implications of transformation and adaptability which the word 'colonial' connotes in culture and literature. Whatever may be their value to the aesthete (and surely some remarkable things were created at this epoch, for example, the brilliantly composed pictures dealing with Firoz Shah, the King of Bengal, one of which is perhaps the best representative, outside Herat, of the school of Bihzad), to an art historian these early works are an important store-house of knowledge from which may be disengaged, in later products, those formative elements which constitute their pictorial foundation.

There are some writers who concede the employment of the term 'Indo-Persian' to the work done under the first two Mughal emperors but object to extending it to later periods. This seems illogical, for, if its use evokes in our mind the most important constituent currents of this art, there is no reason why it may not be employed to cover the entire period of its existence.

We all know that, even after Mughal art had reached its culminating point and had become an integral part of Indian culture, there were painters under Shahjahan and later, who, tired of portraiture or *genre* painting in the new style, were either copying or doing original work in the Irani *qalam*. As a matter of fact, the Irani *qalam* is persistent up to the present day and its unique appeal will die only when Persia ceases to live and influence. But one may go farther in the use of the term 'Indo-Persian', even though this might appear most heterodox and include, because of reasons which will be given later, many works executed with another intention, the Hindu or the Rajput, so called at times justifiably, for the same ease in classification but more often with a desire to assert their utter independence of the main stream of Indian art, which, during the 16th and 17th centuries, happened to be flowing at Agra, Delhi and Aurangabad under non-Indian and non-Hindu rulers. This, the central idea of my essay should be made quite clear at the outset. We are all aware of the distinctions—and many of them are of a deep nature—which exist between what are termed Mughal and Rajput art. There are some outstanding differences which will be dealt with later, but it should be remembered that it is impossible to study these arts without recognising their close interdependence and the contribution of one to the growth of the other, and without constant reference to the two traditions which constitute their source. They are both expressions of a creative impulse made possible by the splendour and organisation of the Indo-Persian princes. The chief difference between the two being that one drew its subjects more from Indian religious lore and the other more from the profane urbanity of Persian ways.

In order to make this point clear, a digression may be permitted and facts, though well known, may be repeated so that the problem can be seen in its true perspective. The great name in the history of painting in Persia, as well as in India, during the 16th century is Bihzad. The work of this gifted artist at Herat, and of his followers, was a constant model to Mughal painters, though Persia had produced some of its most exquisite painting just before him, and Bihzad, with an extraordinary genius for artistic combination, had contrived to unite the traditional elements into an eclectic whole. He was no innovator but a conservative creator, with an inspired eye for pleasurable selection and arrangement. The name of the Raphael of the East, given to him by some writers on Persian art, seems particularly inept, for Raphael's pictures are



characterised by an astounding factura which is not always present in Bihzad's work, but the Persian painter resembles that great Renaissance master because the work of both, though derivative, is grounded on a purely pictorial synthesis. No extraneous feeling, religious or profane, excites them; they revel in the pure joy of painting, in the marvel of line and colour for the sake of the painting itself. To be better than Bihzad, or even to be his equal, was the highest praise that could be lavished on an artist. It is for this reason that Abul Fazl, in a mood of exaggerated and unconscientious flattery, maintains the superiority of his master's artists over the wizard of Persian painting.

Like most orientals the Persians did not possess great interest in perspective. Their pictures were book illustrations and were meant to be looked at from above and not in a diagonal or in a straight line from the eye as in western paintings. One should not, however, suppose that the Persians were incapable of perspective drawing. You have only to see some of their best-known pictures to notice how the masses on the sky line are arranged in diminution, and where not deliberately distorted for pictorial effect, the third plane is in scientific perspective. Generally the figures and elements in the first two planes are of equal size; sometimes those in the first plane, if unimportant for the action, are smaller than those in the second. This shows that scientific perspective, though understood and often employed, was not considered an absolutely necessary constituent of every picture as demanded by western tradition today. The chief aim of the Persian artist was centrality; as long as the attention was effectively focussed on the centre of the picture, it did not matter if the eye roamed to either end and found on both sides the pictorial elements in diminution. From this importance given to centrality one can easily deduce the inevitable passage of Persian art, and of its closest follower, that of the Mughals, towards portraiture. Persian art is also the art of line and not of volume. In this direction it attained a virtuosity and inventiveness unrivalled by any art of the middle ages, not even the Chinese, to which it owes so much for its technique and early inspiration. Both Mughal and Rajput art are also exclusively founded on line, a tradition which we might call Asiatic, for we find line to be the basis of the best frescoes at Ajanta and elsewhere, such as in Tuan Huang in Eastern Turkestan or at Horuyuji in Japan, where the original impulse came from India. The centrality of action refers only to the aesthetic action of the eye in encompassing the picture. It does not allude to a deliberate intention on the part of the Persian painters to limit our awareness to dramatic events taking place in the centre of the picture. In fact, of all the arts, Persian painting is least concerned with dramatic feeling. This must be a survival of early Byzantine influences noticeable also in the art products of the Sassanians. This particular trait forms one of the most important distinctions between the art of the Persians and that of the Arabs, who, from the beginning of pictorial art among them, have awkwardly and often incapably struggled to depict semitic anthropocentric sentiments. To a careless observer, however, Persian art

may also suggest the dramatic, because its compositional arrangements often deal with animated scenes peopled with human figures and an atmosphere of animation not infrequently engenders a sense of the drama. But this is illusory and accidental. Nothing could be farther from the Persian artist's intention. In his best creations he is utterly devoid of that intense striving, so characteristic of the Indian tradition to solve his pictorial problem with the help of formal contrasts. Mughal pictures in their formative and classical stages tried to adopt, though with little success, the Persian manner, but they could not withstand the pressure of contemporary Hindu painting, which was replete with movement and action, often tending, in the works of some of the lesser-known schools, even towards theatricality.

The aim of the Persian painter thus was to establish beauty by the arrangement of the pictorial elements at his disposal with the deliberate intention of producing artistic effect. Being impervious to all emotions except the search after beauty, his creations, in their subtle mingling of bright colours and fluent line, had alliances with glowing mosaics or lovely carpets. He opens up to one a world where both the painter and the spectator delight in the beauty of flowers, in the gold, white, deep red and bright blue with which their world is bathed, in coral shaped mountains, curling *tai* clouds, blossoming trees, fleet-limbed animals, gorgeous dresses, his vision is of paradise, a word with Achaemenian associations, where all is exquisiteness of form and purity of colour. Neither the Mughal nor the Rajput, the one with his masterly draughtsmanship and the other with his luminous colours, except in rare instances, attained the joyous beauty of Persian painting in which the delight of the painter in the subject was such that his design often overflowed the bands of flowery diapers which usually encompass his pictures. The striving after a deliberate pictorial effect is an inheritance which, with varying success, persisted throughout the range of Mughal painting. It is not that the Hindus absolutely rejected this principle; though perhaps reluctantly they did make use of it during the period of the full blossoming of their art, the only thing that may be maintained is that the purely pictorial intention, as distinct from the dramatic, is foreign and generally distasteful to Indian tradition and temperament.

Some of the original features of Persian painting have been briefly indicated in order that attention may be directed to those elements which derived from that source in Indian medieval art. In the earlier works of the Mughals one is presented with the same seemingly haphazard disposition of pictorial elements, a similar discursiveness, but without that inner pictorial cohesion and compositional unity which characterised Bihzad and his immediate precursors. The colours, though as costly and recherche as in Persia, to the preparation of which, according to Abul Fazal, his Royal Master, gave his personal attention, do not possess the same lustre and enamel-like quality, though, strangely enough this is often to be found among the Rajputs. The Persian conventions of the high ridge against the sky line, of filling one side of the picture with architecture, of the central carpet, not in relief but as a rectangular design

in colour with seated figures, the coral hills ending in animal heads, a survival of Iranian nomadic tradition, the laying of scenes in ravines between two mountains, all these are adopted but usually incapably utilised. A compositional convention of particular interest to us is the one in which the main action is preceded by a foreground of crenelated architectural fences, usually with a stream flowing below, carrying birds and flowers. This setting Strzygowski has claimed to be an essential element in what he calls *hvarena* landscape, originating from Nordic-Iranian experience: it is a landscape bathed in the glow of holiness which emanates from Ahura Mazda. He has pointed out its presence at Ajanta and in the beautiful Byzantine mosaics of Ravenna. This convention is to be found in a large number of Mughal and Rajput work, but has never been so extensively or appropriately employed as in the Deccan, in centres geographically close to Ajanta, at Aurangabad, Golconda and Bijapur.

Coming back to early Mughal art, the absence of those supreme factors present in every good Persian work, namely quality and finish, is most noticeable. These have been Iran's contribution to Asiatic art from classical times, as students of Mauryan and Kushan art in India will have observed. But the Mughal painters even at this early stage show remarkable gift for drawing, and one can already discern how eventually they will surpass their masters in draughtsmanship. They are keener observers of realistic plasticity than the Persians, but in these early pictures, except when the composition is small, they fail to give full effect to their gift because of incompetent spacing and a lack of feeling for air. The Persians, too, have examples of firm and realistic drawing, but it is something of a side line. There are two pictures on the walls of the Chehel Sutun at Ispahan, done under the Safavids, one of which represents Shah Tahmasp entertaining Humayun, a fugitive at his court, with wine and dancing, where the drawing, tactfully controlled, is of great fineness. But even this cannot compare with the best work of the school of Jehangir, such as the portrait of Ala-ul-mulk Tuni by Chitarman, evidently executed with the famous one-haired brush of the Mughal painters, or the head of Akbar in the India Office Library. In this connection, I would like you to notice the grouping and masterly drawing of a number of Hindu Saints which forms part of a larger picture called 'The Dance of Dervishes' in the possession of Captain Spencer-Churchill, reproduced, because of its outstanding quality, as a separate plate in that delightful book *The Court Painters of the Mughals*. There is no doubt in my mind that the art of perfect draughtsmanship is a part of the Indian heritage, for not only in Ajanta, at a particular phase, was all attention devoted to precision and finish of contours but the exactitude of line and controlled firmness of hand is also an outstanding feature of the Jain miniatures as well as the best examples of the Jaipur *qalam*.

The Mughals borrowed from Persians not merely the technique but also the subject matter of their pictures. Roughly catalogued, the subjects they dealt with were battle scenes, animals and birds, scenes of

hunting, gardens and palaces during construction, showing the remarkable building energy of the emperors, discussion among divines and especially portraiture. Except for a few attempts, Mughal art did not concern itself with the illustrations of narrative poems or epic and literary romantic episodes, but in most examples it would itself round the personality of the rulers who patronised it. As these sovereigns were constantly engaged in conquest, early Mughal painting deals largely with battles, models for which were ready to hand in the Persian illustrations to the *Shah-Namah*. In Mughal art we find in large numbers drawings of animals and birds, often with a semi-scientific end. This is an ancient Islamic practice, which provided an outlet for the representational instinct so ruthlessly limited by religious usage, as can be seen in Arab manuscripts of the so-called Mesopotamian school of the 13th century under the Abbasids. Mountains, called coral, are also of Arab origin and are an important decorative feature in a large number of Persian, Mughal and Rajput pictures. For some indefinable reason their conventional form and texture were connected in the minds of the Arabs with the mountains of India, and in Persian painting too these became necessary elements for producing an exotic atmosphere.

Scenes of the chase, specially connected with the legend of Bahram Gor, fill the pages of Persian books. These are traceable to an earlier period of Iranian art, to the Sassanians, who depicted them on their silver platters and silken stuffs. The Mughal and the Rajputs have made large use of this theme to the glory of their rulers, who were passionate huntsmen, and also because such scenes afford remarkable opportunities for plastic drawing and elaborate compositional arrangements. The swift-limbed and gentle-eyed antelope, the symbol of goodness is a favourite motif with both Mughal and Rajput painters and is hardly ever absent from pictures depicting the hunt.

Conversation among divines in a garden is also a frequent Persian theme, especially at Herat. These take place in an atmosphere of great peace and reasonableness, except for one well-known scene from the time of Tahmasp (that vainglorious prince who can compare with a modern cinema star in the quantity of portraits painted of him in different postures and situations) where one divine, or probably a physician, knocks down the other in the presence of the enthroned monarch. These are several pictures dealing with the theme ascribed to Bihzad, and though they are very ingenious and colourful, as is all his work, they do not exhibit the quiet and charm which we find in the best Mughal interpretations, where the psychological situation is exploited to the utmost. Treated with sobriety and decorum, this subject sometimes lends itself to humour. It would be interesting to find out the original source of this particular subject. Both Mughal and Rajput painting abound in it, especially in those variations where princes or princesses visit saints and their disciples and in those pictures where Dara Shikoh is seen engaged in religious discussion. From Ajanta down to the Jain manuscripts, as well as in our folk art, these visits to inspired teachers are a popular theme.

In the Hindu pictures of the later period, the teacher is usually an ascetic, a skeleton of a man, but in Mussalman works the divines are well-fed and portly, suggesting the ancient Indian conception realised in the Buddha, that spiritual eminence is not inseparably associated with emaciation. Of the large number of these delightful character studies, there is probably none better than the one belonging to Jehangir's epoch in the Meseum fur Kunst und Gewerbe at Hamburg where Sultan Parvez is seen sitting under a tree, which divides the pictures into two panels, with two benign teachers, one holding a book in his hand and the other, hunched up beside him, looking at the prince with amused tolerance. The gleam in his eyes is so different from the cold glitter we are accustomed to in those who make of religion a profession in our days. There are two outstanding single portraits belonging to Shahjahan's time, of dervishes, remarkable for their delicate drawing and for the uncanny insight into their religious trends, the one of Shah Bari of Shahjahanabad representing the erudite *salik* and the other of a *majzub* forgetful of the self, concentrated with his whole being on the other world.

The meeting of divines became so popular a subject because compositionally it offered a problem for the spacing of seated figures in the midst of varying landscapes. Its other attraction was that it offered scope for the treatment of psychological traits; the identity of the painter with the inner life of his model became worth achieving after acquaintance with European painting. Moreover, how tired most of these artists must have been of always depicting the ceremonials of court life and the whims of their masters. In my view, this particular picture arrangement must have become a cliché with the Indian painters and being popular with themselves as well as their patrons, even when the theme was varied, the composition was conserved. A very expressive example of this is a picture of ecstatic musicians by Bichtir, a Hindu painter of the mid 17th century, with a startling gift for characterisation.

Of all the themes, however, portraiture must be considered as the most significant realisation of the Mughal genius. It must be remembered that Mughal art is not one of those large roads along which the human creative spirit has travelled. At its best, it is a flowering side, a track that leads through pleasant fields, a delight for connoisseurs, such as are Chinese jade, or Limoges enamels or the ivories of Cordova. It has never been involved in large passions or the tragedy of destiny. Nevertheless, few examples can be found in the world's art of such unruffled tact and refined sensibility as the Mughal portraits. And if Mughal art will live in man's memory it will be for its architecture and its portraits. The Persians too had great portraitists. Amongst them were Bihzad and his followers, Sultan Muhammad, Kamal and Riza-i-Abbasi, to name the best-known among them. Portraiture develops in time of peace, and the early Timurid princes had little time from their wars to pose for pictures in the manner of their descendants, Akbar and Jehangir, who in the midst of military activities had enjoyed moments of respite. Nevertheless we have a remarkable portrait of Timur himself in a



coat of mail with a helmet, turning deep over his face, where the beauty is not in the line but in the skillful handling of masses, which is so characteristic of Turkish work but uncommon in Persian painting. Under the Safavids a great fillip was given to portrait making and we have an MS. dated 1537 where Shah Tahmasp is seen figuring in some role or other in most of the illustrations. An interesting portrait is that of Abdullah Khan, painted about 1570, exhibiting a masterly grasp of the theme, in which this Turkestan ruler is seen holding up a melon, that loved fruit of the Central Asians, the absence of which, among other things, made Babur deprecate the civilization of India.

But Mughal portraiture stands much higher. To my mind never before or after has there been such shrewd psychological observation, realised with such economy of detail and so summarily treated, as during the best period of Mughal art. We know of no brush that was plied with greater surety and restraint, with such reticence and eloquence at the same time. A very slight pencil-shading, a quiet contour and we are face to face with a bared human destiny. Compositionally, the postures are the most elementary, the hand of the model resting on the hilt of a sword, or holding a flower and yet in the stance there is no feeling of rigidity or unease. No wonder that both Rembrandt and Joshua Reynolds were so struck with its excellence. To me the most interesting are those where the outline is left as originally drawn, without use of colours. These wonderful portraits make the Mughal court relive for us in a more intimate manner than any other period of Indian history, and it is due to them that we know so well those men of piety, taste, learning and valour who founded and maintained that glorious Empire.

One thing they have in common with all the best portraits of Asiatic art. They are individual portraits and at the same time they represent types. This trait is of Indian origin; we are supported by the fact that most of the best portraitists at the Mughal court were of Hindu origin such as Chitarman, Anupchatar, Govardhan, Hunhar, to name a few. There seems little doubt that many of the figures of kings and notables at Ajanta were authentic portraits drawn from living human beings, exhibiting this same mixture of the particular and the ideal and displaying an unrivalled breadth of conception and execution. It is often said that Mughal art is mere book illustration and in this respect is contrasted with the Rajput, which, also in miniatures, has the character of frescoes. In other words, Rajput painting, like western or Asiatic art, should be viewed diagonally or in a straight line whereas Mughal art, being folio pictures, have to be pored over in the manner of books. This contrast may hold good for the rest of Mughal work, but the portraits satisfy the same standard as the Rajput miniatures and can at will be enlarged to impressive wall-pictures. These portraits possess, in spite of their small size, especially in the Durbar scene, which was an innovation of the Mughals, a monumentality and quiet dignity that can compare with the best figure studies in Indian art.

Passing from the subject matter to the nature of the art itself, it is here where we find the Mughals closest

allied to the Persians and farthest removed from Indian tradition. It is of utmost importance to understand this point clearly, for this is where the real line of demarcation lies which divides Mughal art from that produced at Hindu courts during the Mughal supremacy of India. Like the Persian, Mughal art is a closed, eclectic, aristocratic art, a growth of luxury and leisure, a product for the delight of the cultivated eye, without any democratic folk appeal. Rajput work, too, was produced in feudal courts or camps, but its chief subject matter was so closely connected with the marvellous, colourful outburst of religious feeling which followed in the wake of Vaishnavism that it lent itself easily to the admiration of the masses. It was boisterous, imaginative, full of the unexpected, intensely personal. This difference is due to something very deep, to racial tastes harkening back to distant ages, to temperaments differently moulded at the beginning of civilization by religion and its handmaid, literature. It seems to me that the common source of literary forms and those of the figurative arts in Asia, the similar artistic attitude which gave rise to both is a significant fact which has not yet been studied. It will be interesting, for example, to discover to what extent the structural serenity of the frescoes at Ajanta is derived from the same source as the clarity and simplicity of the *jataka* stories. For a long time the historians of art have traced the tastefulness and restraint of the Persian artist and his flowing line to the practice of *nastaliq* calligraphy and have compared his execution with the freer brushwork of the Chinese painter, who also learnt his fundamental strokes from the characters of his language. This observation supplies a valuable and revealing insight into the origins of national technique. But till now little thought has been given to the analogy between the epic, the *casida*, the ghazal and the style of the Persian artist. The point need not be elaborated, nor parallels brought from other Asiatic art centres, but it seems clear that most of the Mughal art in its preciousness, meticulousness and even monotony, and more particularly in its intentions, is perfectly intelligible only to those who know of that tendency of Persianised Indians, both Hindus and Mussalmans, to find their literary delight in the couplet. The couplet is limited in range; but it is pithy, aphoristic and replete with content. Its very structure makes it undemocratic and apart, a joy for dilettantes. It has not the lift which lifts the heart, it does not unmake and remake the world as great romantic poetry does, but it is graceful and charming and, what is more important, wholly adequate. In new couplets, because of the limit imposed by its form on the number of words that may be employed, a simile tersely expressed which has been found satisfying in earlier writings is frankly incorporated without acknowledgment. Refinement of senses and tastefulness is thus communicated from generation to generation. This is exactly what Mughal art did, for it borrowed unashamedly from its predecessor's felicitous renderings without even troubling to attempt at originality. This is what the Persians did throughout their most creative epoch in painting; the manner and the feeling differing as the inscription which produced the epic of the *Rubaiyat* inflamed the artist. One can

even imagine the man who takes up an album of Mughal pictures and finds joy in them, to be in the same physical and mental attitude as when he bends over a collection of Indo-Persian verses. It is not claimed that the couplet was the prevalent literary form during the entire period of Mughal rule; but that a parallel might be established between the different phases through which Indo-Persian literature has passed, and the development of Mughal painting which began with the tumult of battle scenes and fantastic adventures and settled down to the narrowness and perfection of the portrait. In fact, it must be clearly understood that no attempt is being made here to establish the influence of literary forms on the figurative arts. That would be a disparagement of our medieval art products which no student of art dare allow himself. The laws that govern literary products are quite distinct from those which govern art products. If this were not so, art objects would have no claim to an independent existence. The greatest drawback of the early discussions on our art has been this very unwarranted interpretation of the one with the help of the other. What I am pointing out is merely resemblances in forms, which exist parallelly at one and the same time, and that these forms evolve from a general cultural conception of life. The resultant attitude towards the facts of the universe rules their rise and growth and begets analogous styles. Similarly, it may be argued that Rajput art was a reflection of a great epic and lyrical tradition. It was a romantic art, distinct in character but not in technique from Mughal art, with a larger sweep of imaginations corresponding to a larger variety and range of contemporary literary forms. Those who know the songs of medieval Indian poets and saints, unconscious of their burden of beauty, naive and unadorned, ecstatic and tender, will get a true glimpse of the feeling which inspired this art. It is Krishna-lila, it is Kabir, Mira Bai and Vidyapati in line and colour.

Until now we have been considering some traits of Persian art which influenced the Mughals. I have tried to indicate the individual contributions of the Mughals and mentioned their indigenous attachments and alliances and touched upon a few of the similarities and differences existing between the Mughal and the Persian, on the one side, and on the other, between the Mughal and medieval Hindu art. This last point requires elaboration because the approach is controversial and rests on contentions which have not been accepted by the more well-known writers on Indian art, who have been most assiduous in dissociating Mughal art from the Rajput, maintaining the superiority of the latter over the former—a vain attempt, for beauty has many facets—and have tried to trace Rajput painting to purely indigenous influences.

It is well known that after Ajanta we have no certain records of great painting in India till its revival in the 16th century. Attempts have, therefore, been made to fill up this hiatus, and, since Ajanta, like Buddhism, which inspired it, is not merely an Indian but an Asiatic heritage, we have been told to look beyond our frontiers for the survival of Indian traditions to Central Asia, to China and to Japan. But painting



followed in these countries the line of the evolution of a national art which assimilated foreign influences; it was never imitative. The Indian influence is obviously undeniable; but it was so deeply modified by counter-influences, Turki, Scythian and Chinese, that the resemblance between the painting of those countries and our own medieval work is indeed remote. As this was undisputed, it was postulated that Indian painting must have had a continuous existence in India, records of which have been lost to us, lurking perhaps somewhere in mountain fastnesses, in forgotten provincial courts or in religious confraternities. Then the newly-discovered Gujarati Jain miniatures were taken to be the missing link connecting Ajanta and Rajput work. Hindu or Rajput medieval painting, as is well known, is divided into two groups—Rajasthani and Pahari, and it has been claimed that this division has been made solely for convenience of classification. The difference, however, in the nature of the two schools, in feeling and in the methods of solving the pictorial problems, is immense. Except that both deal with analogous subjects, the line of demarcation between them is as clearly and deeply marked as between themselves and Mughal art. The fact that Hindu painters were responsible for their production is of no particular significance since much of Mughal painting was also the work of Hindus. A common religion professed by artists is hardly enough to unite such disparate artistic expressions into one group. For the same reason, because Jain work was done by Hindus and was inspired by Hindu religious traditions it is not necessarily allied to pictures painted in other Hindu cultural groups. Whoever has seen the Jain miniatures, their stolid composition, their crude contrasting colours, their dullness and stiffness, cannot possibly maintain that it was they that paved the way to that work, vibrant with life and colour, which was produced in Rajsthan and in the Hills. The utmost that might be conceded is that the firm, though unimaginative, drawing which underlay Jain work and the iconographical types to which it gave currency, may, to some extent, have influenced early Rajasthani painting, as can be seen in the picture of a saint from Rajputana of the early 17th century, but it had no effect at all on the Kangra school. In fact, when you compare Jain miniatures with Mola Ram's work or with other Hill paintings, you will be convinced that, if at all, they had a very restricted sphere of radiation, and although outwardly there may be points of similarity, even Rajasthani work of the best kind is absolutely unaffected by those drawings of marionettes with sharp pointed noses in two-third profiles.

It would be useful to consider briefly the character of the interesting Rajasthani school of painting, which grew and flourished in the Rajputana plains and which was one of three important movements in the Indian art of the middle ages. So much has been made of the undisputed charm and excellence of the work of the Hindu Hill painters with their easy communicability and quick, sensuous appeal that due attention has not been paid to Rajasthani painting, perhaps a little unsympathetic to the casual observer, but in essence vigorous and expressionistic. Roughly speaking, this

school has two epochs, the earlier being dramatic and gestural and the later, under court influence, tending to become hieratic and crudely lyrical. Crudeness is one of the glaring traits of this work, but such is the forcefulness of expression that the very defect becomes a virtue. In fact, in sentiment and technique, it is nearest to modernist art movements because, like them, it encounters the aesthetic expectation with a blow, smashing it and then repiecing it into an experience of its own. This will be evident from a striking picture from the 16th century representing one of the *ragas* reproduced by Coomaraswamy in his standard book on *Indian and Indonesian Art*, a close study of which will reveal to you the principles of this art.¹ Though at first glance the composition appears simple, much ingenuity has been expended by the artist in order to justify pictorially the horizontal gesture of the hand of the seated figure. This unseemingly, effortless shrewdness is one of the characteristics of folk art, and early Rajasthani pictures in many respects approximate that kind of art. The sentiment is simple and naive, but the execution determined and audacious, unconscious and unafraid of critical standards, which prevail in sophisticated milieus and which impose on an artist's creation hesitancy and nervousness. The stylisation of the tree with clambering 'sappy' leaves appears in a form which must have become a popular convention since it is to be found persisting in many pictures of a much later date.

Perhaps with some show of justification it may be maintained of this school that, taking as it does its root in the Indian soil, rich in folk traditions and gestural in the bold spirit of Indian sculpture, it is independent of outside influence; but this would be a superficial observation, for, on closer scrutiny, it will be found that Rajasthani work, though to a lesser extent than Hill art, also belongs to the Indo-Persian family. The first thing one should notice is that the colouring has the same quality as in Persian painting and, what is more, the technique of emphasising different planes with the use of lustrous colours, which is one of the characteristics of Bihzad's school, is also employed here. The palette of the artist, except in the black and beautiful Indian red, which are obviously indigenous, is un-Indian, the ingredients used the same as in the list of Persian and Mughal colours and prepared in exactly the same manner. The enamel-like surface of the pictures brings this school and the best works of Kangra nearer to the Persians in colouring, than the art of the Mughals. One fact, however, is absolutely certain that Jain miniatures could have had no influence at all on the colour scheme of these artists.

The trees on the left of the picture also deserve attention, the first cypress nearest the extended arm is obviously an Islamic contribution.² Trees with bulbous leaves figure more often in Rajasthani work; they are frequently met with in the folk art of most peoples. We find them as far apart as Bengal *pats* and the Russian *luboks*. In very early Persian art, before Mongol influence had opened up for it new directions, we find the same kind of tree, evidently derived from Arab Mesopotamia. There are several pictures of the period of the Abbasids where such trees figure. In one of them

there are birds among the leaves. The tree, as is well known, is an ancient Iranian symbol, being the representation of Homa, the tree of life. It occurs in that context in almost all the classical arts. The birds seated among its branches derive from the ancient Iranian legend of the singing tree. Rajasthani art has many pictures with this particular decorative detail. It is not suggested that the use of the tree shows a direct Persian influence, because the tree is found in nature everywhere and as a symbol is common to all the peoples of Iranian stock, especially among the Central Asian nomads from whom the Rajputs descend. It seems to me, however, that bulbous leaves with seated birds is an importation of a later date, contemporary with Mughal art, and that it was most probably borrowed from some early Persian book illustration.

My choice of examples having been limited, I shall refer to another startling picture³ also symbolising one of the *ragas*, where the body is treated with that imaginative grasp of plastic forms which was the secret not only of the great masters of Indian sculpture but of those unknown inventors of the patterns for human figures which obtain in our folk art till to-day. But here I wish to draw attention to another point, to the posture of the human figure stretched out at full length on the bed. It is well known that during the Renaissance the reclining man or woman was treated iconographically in one particular attitude; the back used to be propped up on pillows or some other support and the head was on a definitely higher level than the stretched body. In fact, in many specimens the upper part of the body is drawn at almost a right angle to the lower part. In all cases, however, the feet point in the same direction as the head. This pose is exemplified in innumerable pictures depicting the birth of Christ or of John the Baptist. In instances of our own sculpture, such as the Dream of Maya or the one popularly known as the Birth of Krishna, we come across analogous attitudes. The colossal statuary of the reclining Buddha in Eastern Asia, as well as in Ceylon, are treated somewhat differently as the figures lie completely on one side, but in these cases, too, the head is much above the level of the feet, which always point outwards in the same direction as the head. A notable example of this last pose is said to be the huge Ranganadhan in the holy of holies of Srirangam. The two postures described above must have been deduced from universally accepted formulae, varied as the figure lay straight or completely on the side. We notice this in an illustrated Persian MS. of the *Shah Namah* belonging to the 15th century, now in the possession of the Royal Asiatic Society, London; in that exquisite scene where Tahamina enters Rustom's room to find the hero plunged in thought, he is portrayed as lying at full length with his head supported on his arm, the head being on a definitely higher level than the rest of the body. It is only in later Persian art, contemporary with our medieval painting, that we first come across the figure extended in full, twisted at the waist with the feet pointing to a direction opposed to the movement of the head and sometimes to the upper part of the body. There is a picture of a lady reclining by the riverside,

reproduced by Martin from the *Collection Claude Anet*,⁴ attributed to the end of the 16th century, supposed to have been drawn by Shah Quli, where we find this cliché adapted for his own purposes by the Rajput painter.

On another page, Coomaraswamy gives us the illustration of a Jammu picture of the 17th century depicting the siege of Lanka.⁵ The hill-side is peopled with monkeys who listen to the important conversation taking place in the middle of the picture among human beings. It is amusing to contrast the solemn and responsible attitude of these monkeys with a Mughal illustration of the *Anwar-i-Suhali* of Akbar's time in which the same love of animals and observation of their plastic possibilities is manifested but where they are depicted in a playful mood. I do not suggest any influence of one picture on the other, but it is interesting to observe the tendency in Indian artists to invest animals with human qualities and in the Persians to infuse into human beings the sprightly liveness and untowardness of animals. A careful student of Persian art will notice, for instance, how the antelope has been utilised not only as a model for the external details of the figures of boys and women but also for their suppleness and plasticity. Rajasthani art, more often than not, strikes a portentous note, but in Kangra we meet again the Persian love for moulding human figures in terms of sympathetically observed animal life. This particular picture has, however, been cited for another reason: the undisputable Persian landscape in the Jammu picture of the smaller hill, with its cypresses as well as the Persian convention of the 16th century, often adopted by the Mughals for the shape and the division of the larger hill. The sea too derives from a manner introduced by the Mongols, which one notices in those rare pictures where seas figure in Persia down to the 16th century.

Jammu is one of the centres of Hill painting, but the school best known and worthiest of appreciation is one which had its home in the Kangra valley. Whilst Rajasthani art is founded on hard, manly lines with a vigorous message, here there is fluency and emotional intensity. No two schools dealing with a similar subject-matter stand so far apart. To illustrate the nature of Kangra work and its character of cultured folk art, to which it contributes but from which it is not derived, one might take the famous picture of the late 18th century of homing cows, which used to belong formerly to Dr. Coomaraswamy and is now at the Boston Museum. The draughtsmanship here is sensitive and the treatment of the pictorial elements is so refined as to elevate it to the level of genius. Kangra is best known for its sinuous lines, for a brushwork much freer and bolder than of the Mughals, but of the same calligraphical nature, manifestly more lyrical in intention and, in the majority of cases, more brilliant in execution. The colouring in the pictures of the 18th and 19th centuries is Persian and some of the decorative elements are traceable to the same source. Attention may be paid on this count to a Kangra picture of the end of the 18th century in the British Museum.⁶ The central figure holding in her right hand a scarf extended behind her

belongs to the type loved of the later Kangra painters: short statured with a drooping nose, elongated eyes and a broad face in profile. Two balustrades, also largely used by the Mughal painters, one in the foreground and the other to divide the picture into two are of Persian origin. But the most striking borrowing is that of the leafless flowering tree at the right hand corner, a frequent decorative feature in Kangra pictures, from the Timurids and Bihzad.

Coomaraswamy says that these pictures in the bazar of Amritsar are known as "*tibati*." There is probably more in this than mere ignorance of their origin. The felicitous brushwork of this school, the lines rounding off the image in an accelerated tempo, seem to be due to the influence of China which had penetrated directly to these hill regions from the North and indirectly through Persian painting, of which the quick elastic line is also one of the most valued acquisitions. The art of Kangra, therefore, because of influences from devious routes, is more akin to the Persian and the Mughal than it is to the Rajasthani, though in some of the earlier pictures there is some resemblance between the expressive art of the Rajputs and the Himalayan painters, before they had attained perfection of technique and come into their own in the 19th century at Kangra.

When analogies and frank borrowings from Persia may be maintained in the Hills, it is the more natural that there should exist much resemblance between Rajasthani work and that of the Mughals, since both these branches of Indo-Persian painting grew in action and reaction to each other. That Mughal painting is founded on Persian conventions is undisputed; therefore, Hindu work, when it is analogous to it, cannot claim to have had an entirely individual life. Innumerable examples may be adduced from the books I have chosen as being readily available, to prove the resemblance. Take, for instance, the famous Jaipur cartoon of the 18th century depicting the head of the Dancing Krishna. The drawing here is extremely simple and synthetic which would appear to be a particularity of Hindu technique. Besides, the use of large decorative ornaments on the dress and headgear assimilates the picture to a placard, a kind of art foreign to the Mughals, who avoided large-sized drawing. Yet we find that this picture, and there are many of its kind, possesses a counterpart in an earlier work under Aurangzeb by Muhammad Afzal which depicts a young Gujerati woman. The cliché seems to have been in vogue, both amongst Hindus and the Mughals, before the Rajput painter of Krishna attempted his masterly work. The same can be said of the pictures from the *Nayika* series which was a theme loved of Rajput artists.

In this connection one might notice the night scenes which abound in the work of Hindu painters. A peculiar convention is used: though there is darkness all around, the faces of the personages are as visible as by daylight. It is argued that this is an Indian innovation, and is often used to prove the disregard by Hindus of realistic situations. As a matter of fact, in almost all of these pictures, and some of them were also done in Mughal courts, there is always light thrown from

lanterns, torches, the moon, zigzag lightning, to illumine the faces, so that a justification of the visibility is attempted. This claim of the historians of Hindu art is not quite maintainable. The Persians had employed this convention earlier and it was from them that Indian medieval art borrowed it. In the same MS of the *Shah Namah* of the 15th century, to which I have referred, there is a picture of Rustom rescuing Bihzan from a dungeon. The hero is standing at its mouth looking down into it and a block arbitrarily removed at the bottom of the picture reveals the prisoner, reduced to a skeleton, but visible in every detail as in stark daylight. This, too, is a night scene which is suggested by a cluster of stars and the young moon. Though every face is clearly visible, there still lurks in the texture of the landscape a sense of a cold deep darkness. The defiance of realism is one of those deliberate escapes which great artists in all climes have sought in order to obtain an untrammelled scope for their creation.

It seems to me that to maintain the utter independence of Hindu art from the Persian is a striking instance of how cultural history is sometimes confused by narrowness and sentimentality. The advent of the Mughals was as momentous for the medieval art of India as that of the Kushans for the classical period. It opened the way for international contacts, broke up dry traditionalism, introduced a creative laven into Indian life. Mughal tolerance, reasonableness and tact founded an appropriate atmosphere for the growth of the arts. Theirs was an epoch for revelations and recognitions. The significance accorded to painting in the Mughal court, a Timurid tradition (for, even in Timur's time, the most highly-prized present to the conqueror was a Chinese picture), caused the feudal Hindu houses, whether aligned with or against the new dynasty, to extend patronage to their artists and craftsmen. Moreover, paper of different kinds for painting was introduced by the Mughals from Persia, and this comparatively uncostly material gave the Rajput artists a fruitful opportunity for experimentation which was denied to them by the very nature of frescoes. Specific Persian pigments, such as the blues of lapis lazuli and the yellows of orpiment, were also imported from that country and the depth and liveliness of Rajput colouring, except where the origin is frankly indigenous, as during the "barbaric" period of the Pathans, painting allies the latter to the Persians more than to the Mughals, who employed soberer colours. The greatest contribution of the Persians to Hindu art, however, besides the accelerated line which might also have been derived from folk art, was the communication of a sense of design, of the preconceived pictorial design. The Persians are amongst the great masters of design in the world and the complete control of the pictorial rhythm by the Rajputs under most difficult conditions is to be traced to their example, since Jain work deals with static situations and is, therefore, stereotyped and iconographical.

At this point it is necessary to clear up the different connotations the word 'influences' has in art history. The most easily perceivable influences are in the cases

of copies or adaptations of identical themes with great resemblances in the representation. Few instances of these occur among the objects that have attained the status of art. Influences are also detected when certain decorative details, such as, cypresses, large beads, bulbous leaves, etc., or decorative arrangements, such as the Persian garden, rectangular carpets etc. are transported from one art group to another in recognisable shapes. The former point to an adoption of objects of material civilization which is of more interest to archaeology than to art; the latter reveal the use of certain conventions which have been deemed pleasurable and artistically satisfactory. This last is of the domain of art history. Within this class also fall those realisations in plasticity, such as the woman in a lying position, which one cultural group borrows from the iconography of another. All these, summed up in the words, ornaments and motifs, are easily visible to the eye and when such influences are pointed out there can be no doubt of their validity. Art history, however, is more intimately concerned with the problem of forms, their conception and realisation. Now, forms have no meaning unless they exteriorised in space with the help of adequate technique. Significant form is the artist's vision reduced to line, colour, movement in the best possible way. At the moment of creation the artist is one with the object to be created and with his material and yet he is himself and the object is itself; he is aware of the externality of the object and at one and the same time is conscious of his capacity of translating his vision by technical means into form. So influences of technique are more important than ornaments or motifs as they make an incursion into the very nature of the art. When we say that an Indian artist paints under European influence we do not mean that we find in his pictures European furniture or European decorative ornaments only. We mean that the structure

of his forms, the disposition of his pictorial elements, the means he employs for realising his artistic purpose, are European. The subject matter of a picture is no indication of style or school. Europeans may paint Indians; the Persians and the Mughals did paint a number of Europeans. The Hindus, on the other hand, filled their pictures with architectural and floral elements with which they were most familiar. Their themes, too, were drawn from their mythology and legends, the ethnical types they painted belong to the regions where they flourished. But their manner of realisation whether in the technique of the laying of colours, in the cohesion of design where all fantasy and truculence was subjected to a disciplined pictorial end and even in the structure of their forms was Persian. You will notice that on all counts, though they be of varying degrees of importance for art history, Rajput art stands a debtor to Persia.

Why should the recognition of foreign influences be a disparagement of any art? There is no great art in the world, however individual it might appear at first sight, the Chinese, the Achaemenian or the Egyptian, which is not contributed to its development. A virile artistic milieu absorbs foreign influences and adapts them to its own needs, impressing on them the hall mark of its national genius. It is only at the beginning, or in effete societies, that foreign influences have a disintegrating effect. One can go further and maintain that all authentic art with an intense human appeal must necessarily be the product of several counteracting influences. Because I believe in this, I have attempted to focus attention on three branches of Indo-Persian art which came into being as the result of the collaboration of the two great peoples of India and which an enlightened organic society of patrons and connoisseurs have left to us as one of the most exquisite legacies of our past.

¹Plate Ixxxiii.

²Cf. the stylised cypress in the House of Sidi Yousuf Adami at Cairo, reproduced in the classical work of *Prise d'Avennes*.

³Coomaraswamy: Plate Ixxxvi.

⁴*The Miniature Painting of Persia, India and Turkey*, London 1912, Vol. II Pl. 119 b.

⁵Plate Ixxxvii, Fig. 266.

⁶Reproduced among others, by Stchoukine, Pl. xcv(a) entitled. "The Lady with a Red Shawl."



2. The Background of Early Mughal Painting

by Mulk Raj Anand



The subtle question whether the sensibility of man is mostly inherited or cultivated is fairly well answered by the transition in the feudal periods from the early nomadic Mughal barbarians to their more settled successors. And even in the lifetime of such a ruthless fighter as Timurlane one can see the difference between the first destructive period and the time when, having built his empire, he devoted himself to fine buildings and sending cultural missions to the North, East, West and South of Samarkand. In one or two generations the cultivated refinement of the court already provides the atmosphere for the development of the inner faculties of the young and the creative life begins to glow.

Like other descendants of Timur, Prince Babur seems to have treasured his books, and, in fact, brought his small library with him when he was forced to flee from Farghana to Kabul. And in spite of the fact that he remained an inveterate warrior till the end, he took the opportunity to dictate his memoirs, replete with the most exquisite sense of the poetry of life and a unique tenderness for beasts, birds and flowers. At the height of one campaign, we find him noting in his book that in an orchard, "One young apple tree has turned an admirable autumn colour, on each branch were left five or six leaves in regular array." It was such a sensibility that no painter trying to depict it could have equalled. And he puts down in detail his impressions of buildings, landscapes and those small things which reveal the beauty of the universe.

The fine taste of Babur was inherited by his son Humayun. And though this prince was dogged by failure in battle and had to escape to Persia soon after he came to the throne, he seems even in his penury to have retained the graces of his temperament. As a refugee at the court of the Persian Shah Tehmasp, he spent much of his time visiting old monuments and gardens, hearing recitals of poetry and inspecting the many paintings which were being produced in the court of his Safavid host. On his way back to India, he brought an important painter from Tabrez. This artist, called Mir Sayyid Ali, on whom was conferred the title of Nadir-ud-Mulk, was appointed as a kind of superintendent of the fifty painters whom Humayun engaged to illustrate the Dastan of Amir Hamza. Later, the king invited another painter, Abdu Samad, to come to his court and work on the pictures. As Humayun died only a year after his arrival in Delhi, it is unlikely that many illustrations for the romance of Amir Hamza were finished in his time.

After Humayun, his son Jallal-ud-din Akbar continued to patronize his father's artists and extended the range of his creative interest still further. As a boy, Akbar is said to have taken lessons in drawing under

Abdu Samad, and this teacher seems to have exercised a deeper influence on him than those tutors who taught him words, because, though other princes from Central Asia had patronised the artist, none of them had shown the kind of attachment which Akbar brought to his technique. Abul Fazal records how 'one day at a private party of friends His Majesty, who had conferred on several the pleasure of drawing him remarked, "there are many that hate painting, but such men I dislike. It seems to me that a painter has quite peculiar means of recognising God, for the painter in sketching anything that has life and in devising his limbs one after the other, must come to feel that he cannot bestow individuality on his work and thus he is forced to think of God the giver of life and will thus increase in knowledge".'

These sentiments show that both the Emperor and his biographer were determined to defy the Islamic taboo on painting. And during his whole active rule, Akbar kept an establishment of painters busy. The names of nearly 104 such artists have survived.

The important position given to Abdu Samad by his association in the work of illustrating the story of Amir Hamza, and by his appointment later as master of the mint, naturally brought the dominant influence of the Persian style into the court paintings of the Great Mughal even though quite a few painters under Akbar were recruited from among the Hindu artists.

The Persian style by itself was a product of a tradition constituted by three main elements, the Mughals (1230–1360); the Timurid (1357–1500); and the Safavid (16th century). Before Persian painting matured, there had been the background, in the middle east, of the Arabic primitives, painted in the courts of the Khalifs. The style of this Arab work was somewhat archaic but vigorous and reflecting the spirit of the time. In itself, it was the synthesis of the mature Byzantine and Syrian christian sensibilities with the attitudes imbibed from the Indian craftsmen. The drawing of animals, particularly the camel and the ass, are alive though the various influences and elements, imbibed from Indian frescoes and Chinese brush work, are not completely assimilated.

The Persian tradition, as it developed particularly under Bihzad in the later years of the 15th century, was notable for its rich decorative qualities and its lively sense of colour. The small paintings or miniatures were usually book illustrations and containing in their limited space a sumptuous world of romance. All the objects that the heart could desire, blossoms, trees, mountains, were glorified into a fairy tale atmosphere and composed into rich patterns. There was a little attempt at representation or expression. And in this highly coloured two

dimensional world there were no shadows.

The tributes paid to Bihzad's mastery by Babur, Humayun and Akbar led to a predilection for the Persian modes in the work under the Mughals.

The Hamza Namah paintings, though longer than the average Mughal Miniature and painted on cloth, certainly owe much of their form to the Persian concept.

And yet if we look closely into these paintings, they suggest other elements than merely the Persian. There is a certain largeness of scale and rough rigour in the drama enacted; as also, the foliage is intricate.

Soon, these very elements were to be fused, with the characteristic intensity which the indigenous Indian painters obviously brought from the native tradition. What was the actual stage of the Indian tradition at the time of the Mughal conquest?

After the famous wall paintings of Ajanta, which are distinguished for the intricacy of their composition, the depth of the figures, and the use of all the glowing earth's colours in the adumbration of a heightened sense of life, maintained and developed for nearly 800 years from the 2nd century A.D., the tradition of painting in India had survived mostly in folk art or in certain courts of which we have very little or no evidence. Undoubtedly the tradition continued in a broken form, for it re-emerges in the early medieval palm leaf MSS. of the Pal Empires of Bengal and Jain Kalpasutras of Gujerat.

In the medley of Jain MSS, we see small traces of Timurid and Persian influence, specially in the drawing of isolated figures. But there are very sharp differences among art historians about how much or how little alien influence crept into Indian Medieval painting.

Under the Sultanates, established by the Pathans after the invasions of Mahmood of Ghazni, some kind of patronage was always extended to the arts. In the 300 years of penetration into the land, the foreigners had settled down, inter-mixed and adopted Indian modes of living. In the Bijapur and Bidar Muslim kingdoms, the native styles of music and architecture were taken up, and similar synthesis was adopted under the sultans of Ahmedabad, of Jaunpur and Malwa. The fashionable preference for Persian style painting is clearly obvious in the work of most of these courts.

And maybe these preferences affected even in a remote degree, the line and colour of the indigenous painters engaged in reproducing the symbolism of holy books.

At any rate, there were the reminiscences of the indigenous painting current in the country, engaged not only in Manuscript illustration but adept in the art of tempera work on prepared masonry in large buildings, both religious and secular. The talent for extensive dramatic composition of many figures, and for characterisation, was exercised, as we see recorded, in the opinion of Firoz Shah in the fourteenth century, that 'it was right among monarchs to have painted chambers to gratify their eyes in retirement'. So he prohibited the paintings of portraits as contrary to the law, and directed that garden scenes should be painted instead. The continuation of the wall decoration of the Vijayanagar empire had also been maintained.

So that when the Mughal began to take initiatives in the 16th century, quite a few dynamic artists were available, who were to bring the Indian sensibility to the Imperial court.

Thus the Persian feeling for sensuous beauty in line and colour fuse with the feeling for crowded animation and sense of individual character. The Safavid elegance yielded to contemplative depth. The two dimensional flats began to be varied with the emphasis on a projected third dimension.

And the distinctive qualities of the original Mughal school began to take shape.

As in regard to buildings, so in the realm of painting, Akbar's attitude was self-consciously intellectual. He had accepted India as his home, and had strained after a vision of a unified Indian Culture. This did not merely mean picking up a motif here and a motif there, but, a groping after the philosophical view of the unity of life, as when, suddenly overcome by compassion for wild animals, he had abandoned the Qumar-Gra-hunt with the injunction, 'not a feather or a finch was to be touched.'

This sensitive perception was obviously derived from the discussions with the Jain and Hindu divines. And it was in the spirit of this inquiring into the realisation of intense emotional contact that he encouraged painting. Says Abul Fazal, 'He gives it every encouragement as he looks upon it as a means both of study and amusement. Hence the art flourishes, and many painters have obtained great reputation. The works of all painters are weekly laid before His Majesty by the Daroghas and the clerks, he then confers rewards according to excellence of workmanship or increases the monthly salaries. Much progress was made in the commodities required by painters and the correct prices for such articles were carefully ascertained. The mixture of colours has especially been improved. The pictures thus receive a hitherto unknown finish. Most excellent painters are now to be found and masterpieces worthy of a Bihzad may be placed at the side of the wonderful works of the European painters who have attained world-wide fame. The minuteness in detail, the general finish, the boldness of execution etc., now observed in pictures, are incomparable. Even inanimate objects look as if they had life. More than a hundred painters have become famous masters of the art, while the number of those who approach perfection, or of those who are middling, is very large. This is especially true of the Hindus; their pictures surpass our conception of things; few indeed in the whole world are found equal to them.'

The chapter on painting in the *Ain-i-Akbari* from which the above paragraph is quoted follows Abul Fazal's account of the art of calligraphy and its contemporary masters. The emphasis on the traditional Persian or Mohammedan exaltation of calligraphy was encouraged among the painters. So the insistence on line for its own sake must have become almost a directive to the court artist, and on the other hand, Abul Fazal's reference to the superiority of the Hindus, in their conception of things, shows that the court recognised the interest in character and expression and

other mental attitudes which the Hindu painters brought to the pictures commissioned to them.

It is likely, that the use of wall paintings in Maryam-Zamani's palace in Fatehpur Sikri was to emulate the Hindu traditional practice for such decorations. It has been suggested that these wall paintings were executed about 1570 or a little later.

Into these two streams of Muslim and Hindu influences entered a third factor, the influence of the Christian-European pictures, which the Jesuit missionaries brought to Fatehpur Sikri about 1580. According to the records of these missionaries, the Emperor had hung pictures of Christ, Mary, Moses and Mohammed in his dining room. And, he had ordered his own painters to make copies of the western paintings which their Christian fathers had placed in their chapel in Fatehpur Sikri, which Akbar visited frequently. In the fresco in the house of Maryam Zamani there are winged figures seated on a chair with a high back and wearing a long flowing robe caught up over the left arm, which rests upon the breasts hidden by a blue tippet. Opposite is the outline of face and wings of an eagle. This absorption of the theme of the annunciation, through the individual fantasy of the painter, who represented the virgin with wings, shows how influences were sought to be assimilated.

But it may be asked how exactly are these various formed elements related in the pictures?

Almost from the earliest pictures painted in Akbar's reign, there is a subtle interpenetration of the Safavid style with the Indian proportions. The largeness of Amir Hamza paintings is not the only factor. The drawing, in the painting of young Akbar receiving the news of his father's fatal fall, dated about 1556 by late Mr. Percy Brown, is bold and reveals the typical Indian Expressionism. The look of concern in the face of the Prince and solemnity of the messenger, as well as the stance of the dog below suggest the Hindu talent for characterisation. The treatment of landscape and foliage tends also to be un-Persian, though the buildings are still Safavid.

Again, in the portrait of Amir Shaikh Hasan Noyan, Wali of Baghdad, the general outlook is Safavid, but again the draftsmanship is suggestive of Hindu manner as, indeed, is the feeling of the largeness of landscape. The introduction of the typical Indian village characters, the herdsman with his cows and buffaloes and wife and child, into the Haft-Paikar illustration (A.D. 1575), dilutes the overall Persian effect of this picture. The tree is also denser and sheep almost seem to speak.

An excellent example of the interplay of Persian and Indian techniques is afforded by the painting showing the arrival of Tansen, the famous musician at the court of Akbar (A.D. 1562). The whole picture is in its general outlook, architecture and decorative detail, Persian. But if one concentrates on the disposition of the characters in this dramatic event and studies the impression of largeness of the composition, the Hindu manner becomes obvious. Even the line, Persian style buildings are taking on the Hindu Baradari upstairs as well as the jali work. The delicate Safavid foliage

is becoming thicker. And the animals are treated almost as if they are human beings. So the essentially Persian base is being modulated by the Indian vision.

Again, the cotton cloth paintings of the pictures, Princes of the House of Timur painted by Abdu Samad, (A.D. 1570, British Museum) suggests the adoption of the outlook of the Hindu wall painting in a perspective which is faithful to the Herat style.

Thus the mixture of forms rendered possible by the eclectic genius of the Emperor provided the potential for synthesis. There was no conscious attempt at fusion until later, and Persian and Indian styles developed almost on parallel lines.

The first tentative and self-conscious attempts at the mingling of the two traditions may have begun when the Emperor established a collective studio for all the painters at Fatehpur Sikri, put his library of illustrated manuscripts together and encouraged the painters to copy the old pictures and to improve on them.

Also, this special department for painting engaged itself with practical matters. Akbar's thoroughness is suggested by the interest he took in the improvement of materials for painting. Abul Fazal states that 'Much progress was made in the commodities required by painters and the correct prices of such articles were carefully ascertained. The mixtures of colours has been specially improved.' This technical section was necessary, because, apart from the walls of palaces of Fatehpur Sikri, miniatures on paper and book illustrations required special kind of paper and different pigments from the tempera colours used in India before.

In all these matters the voice of the two directors—Mir Sayyid Ali and Abdu Samad remained influential. Hence the preference for Persian methods and styles continued in the long series of pictures of the Akbar Namah, the Babur Namah and various other MSS.

The Persian influence was reinforced by the arrival of another distinguished artist of Kalmak in Central Asia, Farrukh Beg, who joined the Emperor's service in the year 1585. He had been working under Akbar's brother Mirza Muhammad Hakim in Kabul, and came over immediately after the latter's death. The illustrations of Babur Namah on which he worked are definitely Timurid-Safavid in style, except for the treatment of animals and birds.

And just after Farrukh Beg arrived, another Persian artist, Aqa Riza of Herat, came, whom Jehangir mentions as having joined by service at the time he was Prince. This old man also brought the Herat and Bukhara techniques which he had practised for a long time as a follower of Bihzad.

But during the Golden period of Akbar's school of painting at Fatehpur Sikri between 1570–1585, certain Hindu artists were singled out for praise. One of these was Daswanth and the other called Basawan. About Daswanth, Abul Fazal states—'One day the far seeing glance of the Emperor fell upon him and with his penetrating vision recognising that here was a master in the art, he entrusted him to the care of Abdu Samad. The painter rose quickly to the height of his profession but he went mad later and committed suicide.'

Certain pictures in the Razm Namah, formerly in the Jaipur Pothikhana, are known to be the work of this genius. The second distinguished Hindu, Basawan, was preferred by some critics to Daswanth. Abul Fazal says that 'he was unsurpassed in making the original sketch of the picture, Tarrahi; painting faces (Chera-kushai); blending colours (rang-amizi); and taking likenesses (Manand-Nagiri).'

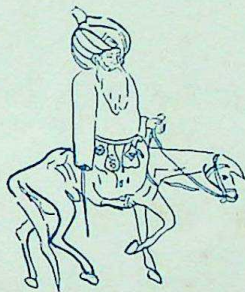
The incidental details about the various parts of a design show that the Fatehpur Sikri studio, by and large, retained the anonymous tradition of India in which joint work is preferred to the emphasis on the individual.

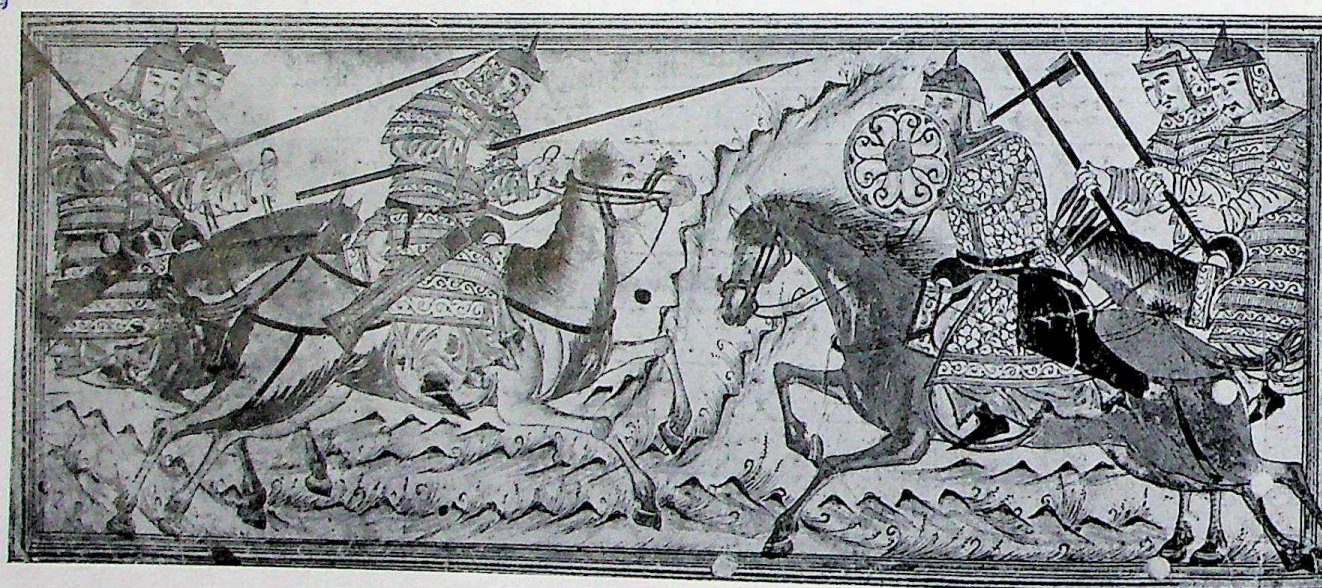
After the Emperor left Fatehpur Sikri for prolonged stays in Lahore, he seems to have taken some painters with him and ordered wall paintings in the palace in the Lahore fort. According to the brief account by Fitch, one of the first Englishmen to arrive in the Mughal court, the paintings he saw in Lahore 'were many pictures of angels, as well as firesome ones of

Devils, with long tails, horns, etc.' This seems to suggest that the theme was the Persian Version of the visit of the queen of Sheba to the court of King Solomon. And the Persian style seems to have been preferred.

The direction of the Emperor's mind which was, in his maturity, towards the evolution of a comprehensive life concept and which resulted in the foundation of the Unitary faith *Din-i-Ilahi* of which he was the spiritual and temporal head, did not result in any orders for a mechanical fusion of Muslim and Hindu styles in painting. The enlightened patron knew that such things cannot be forced in the arts. And, while in architecture, he mingled Vaishnava impulses with the domes of Samarkand, he was content to allow the sensibilities of the Muslims and Hindus to express themselves fully.

Already, at the close of his life, under the patronage of his son, Jehangir, in whose veins Central Asian and Hindu blood flowed, a genuinely integrated Persian-Indian or Indo-Mughal art was emergent.





1. Ala-al-din Sultan of Delhi, receives the kneeling Firuz Shah (from a manuscript of Jami-al-Tawarikh, A.D. 1310).
2. Battles between heroes of the Mahabharata (from a manuscript of Jami-al-Tawarikh, A.D. 1310).



3

3. The building of a mosque (from a manuscript of Nizami by Bihzad, A.D. 1494).

4. Portrait of Amir Timur (painted c. A.D. 1575, from the collection of the late Mr. J. C. French, I.C.S.).



4



5. The Emperor Babur dictating his memoirs to a scribe (Painted c. A.D. 1600. By courtesy of Rampur State Library).

5

6. Hamza's enemy Iraj fettered to the upper branches of a tree, the witch Anakrut in another tree offers to liberate him, if, he becomes her lover (Illustration to Dastan-e Amir-Hamza c. A.D. 1570. By courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, London).





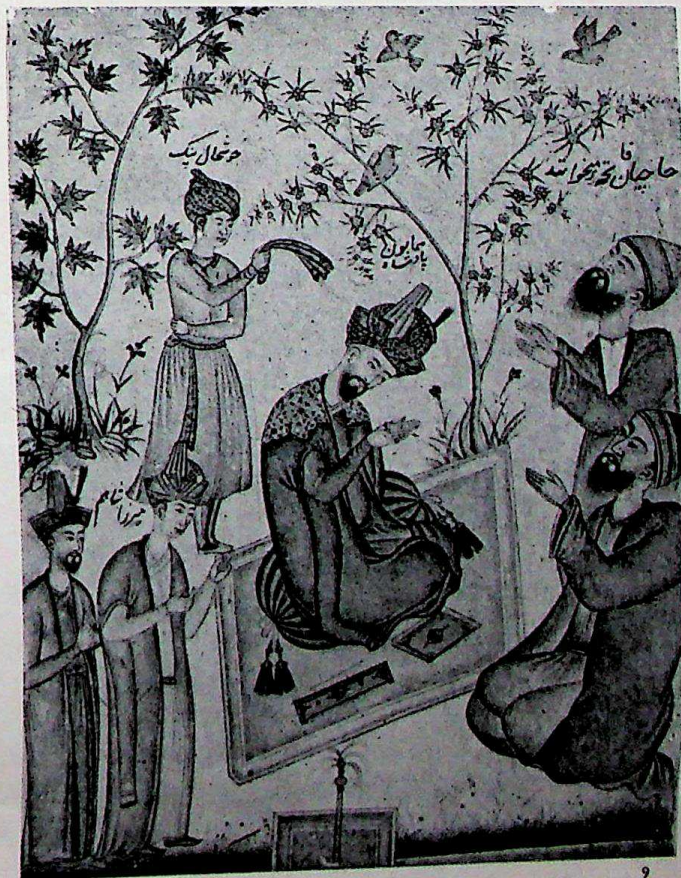


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7. Amir Ayaz witnessing the death of Qamir, (Illustration to the Dastani Amir-Hamza, c. A.D. 1570. By courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, London).

8. Illustration from story of Laila and Mejnun (painted by Mir Sayyed Ali, Safavid style from a copy of Nizami's Khamsa, A.D. 1539-1542. By courtesy of British Museum).

9. Portrait of Humayun with his courtiers, (Signed by Bhagwati. By courtesy of British Museum).



9



10. *Scene from Dastani-Amir Hamza* (Painted by Mir Sayyed Ali, A.D. 1550-1570. By courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, London).

11. *Akbar Namah. Capture of Hemu, the Hindu general, by young Akbar's officers (Collection of Chester Beatty).*



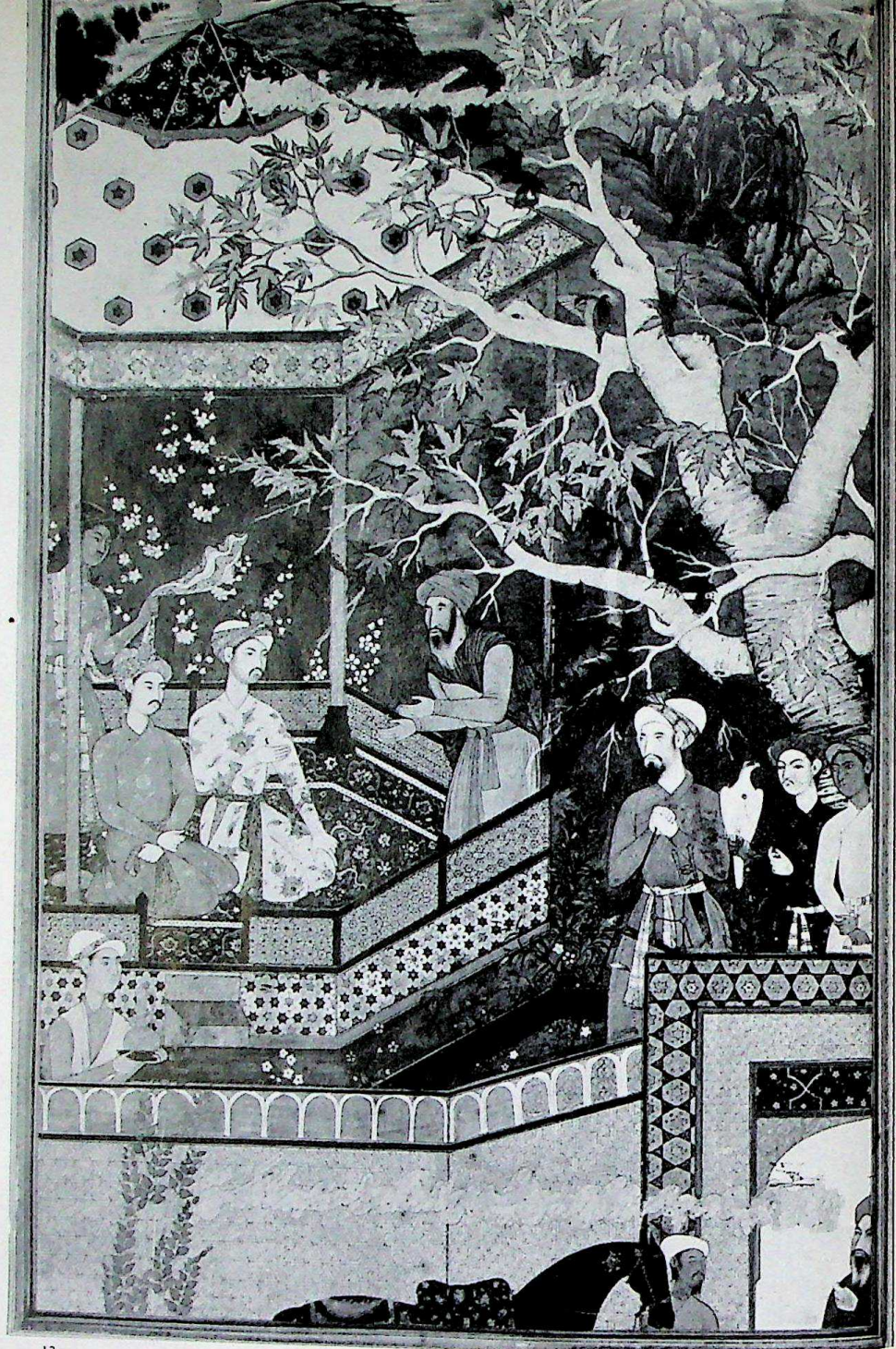
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12. *Akbar as a young prince receiving the news of his father's fatal fall, A.D. 1556 (By courtesy of Indian Museum, Calcutta).*



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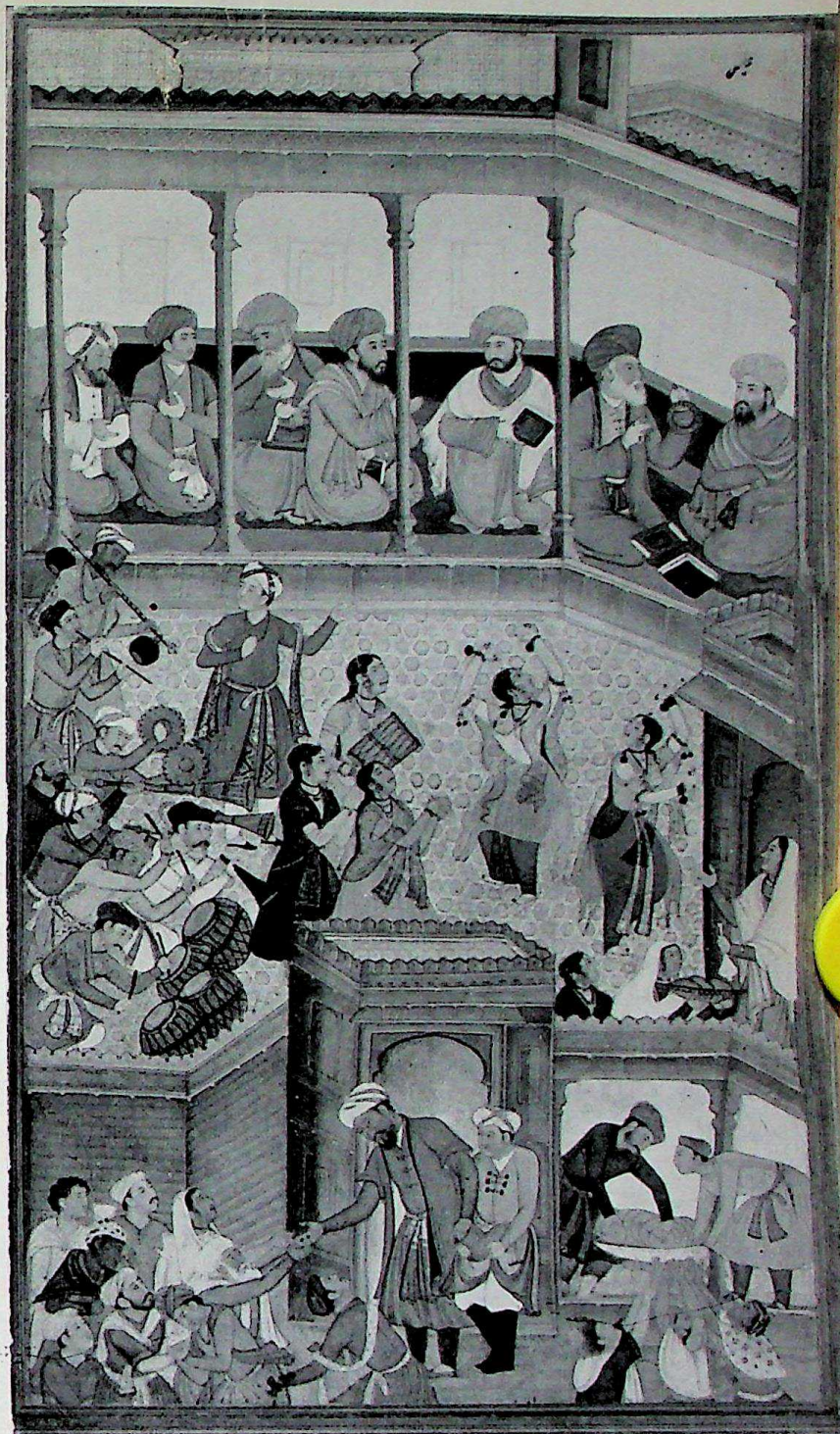
13. From the Akbar Namah: Interview between Mir Mu'izz-ul-Mulk and Bahadur Khan, in 1567 (Painted by Farukh Beg).

14. Arrest of Shah Ma'aali, by Taliq Khan Qochi, (drawn by Abdus Samad, A.D. 1556. By courtesy of Bodleian Library, Oxford).



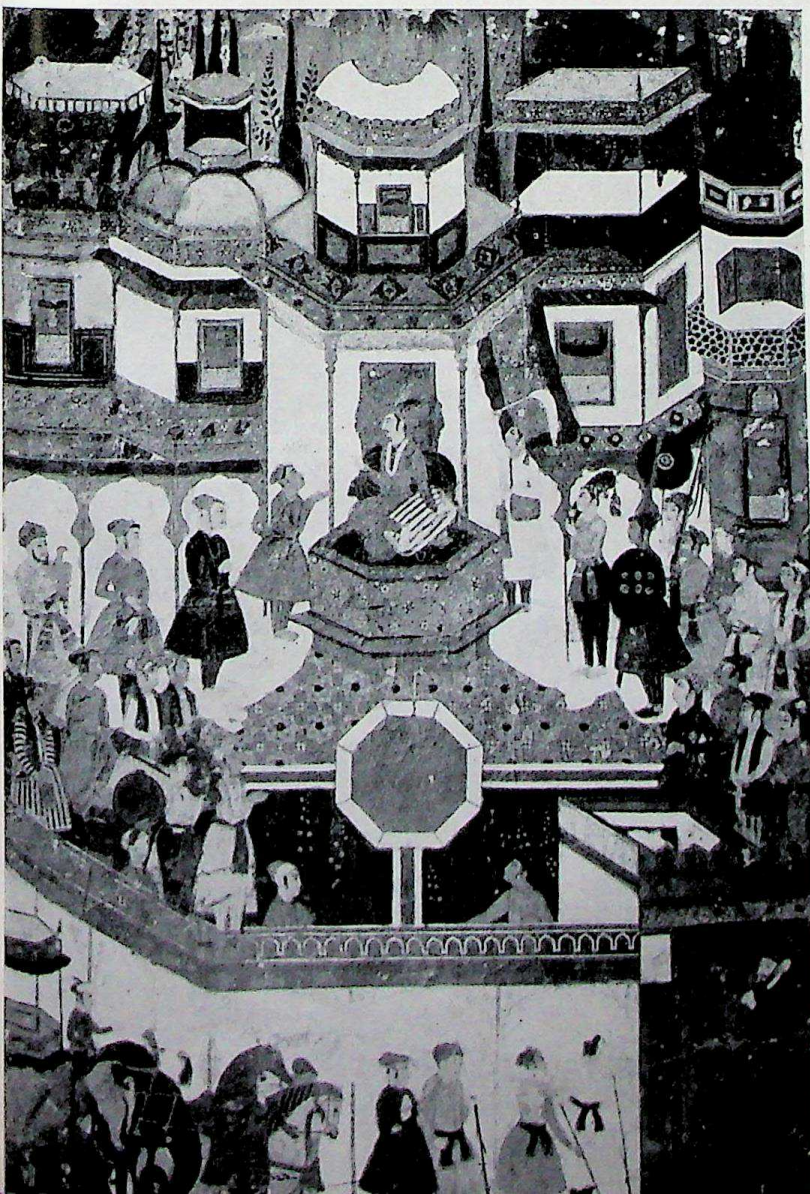
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15. *Rejoicings at the birth of Prince Salim (from the Akbar Namah—Collection of Chester Beatty).*



15

16. *Arrival of Tansen, the musician, at the court of Akbar, A.D. 1562. (By courtesy of Indian Museum, Calcutta).*



16



17



18

17. The building of the Red Fort at Agra in 1565, (Outline by Miskin, painting by Tulsi the younger; from the Akbar Namah c. A.D. 1600. By courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London).
18. Akbar inspecting the building of Fatehpur Sikri, (Outline by Tulsi, painting by Madho the younger. By courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London).

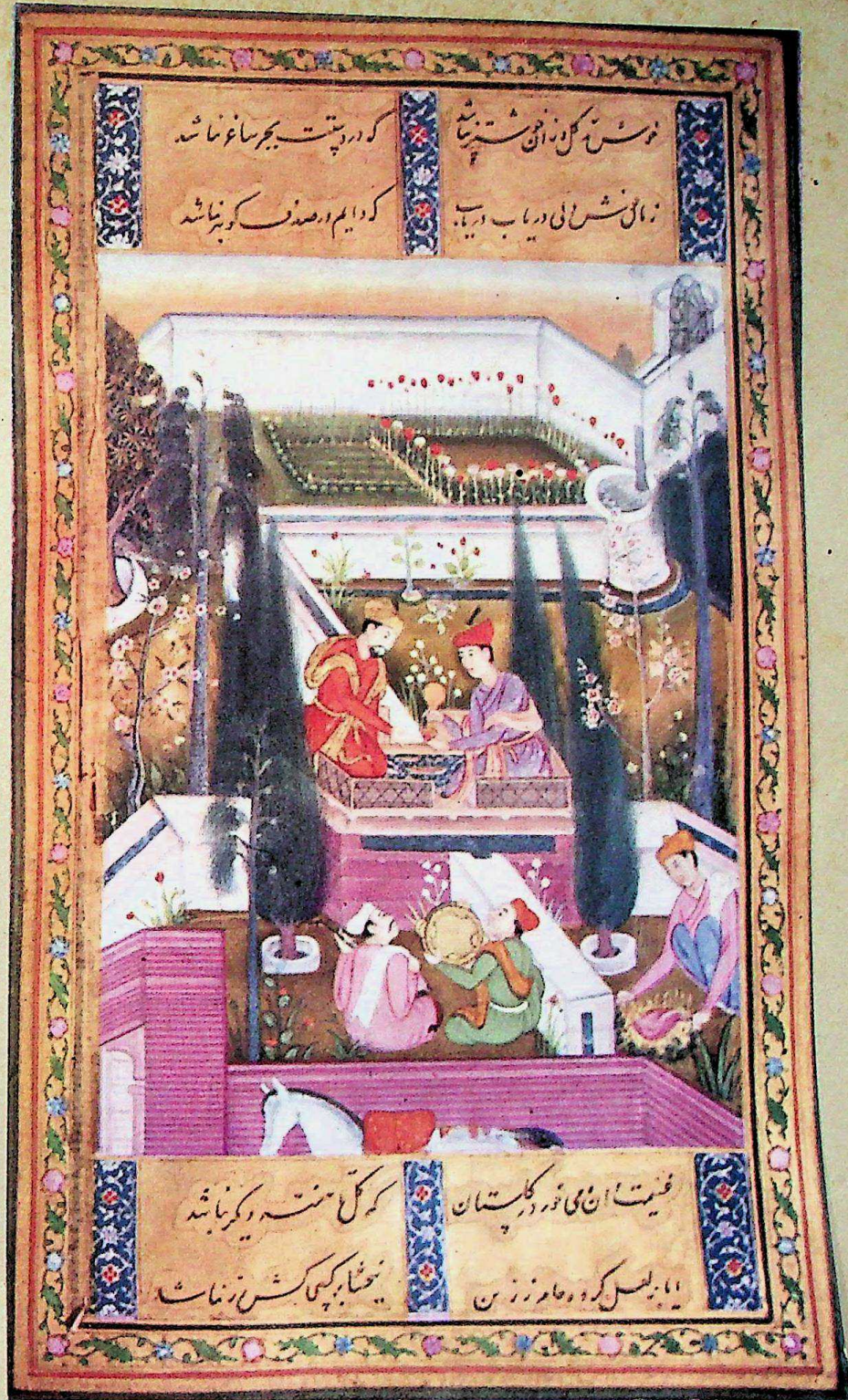


Illustration of a scene from *Diwan-i-Hafiz*
(By Courtesy, National Museum of India, New Delhi)



An illustration from the Babur Namah, School of Akbar, c. A.D. 1598. (National Museum, New Delhi). From Mughal Miniatures by Rai Kishandasa in Lalit Kala series of Indian Art, whose General Editor is Karl Khandalavala.

3. Miniatures from a 16th Century Manuscript—"Babur Namah"

by Professor S. I. Tulayev

In the State Museum of Eastern Cultures in Moscow the series of valuable miniatures—illustrations from one of the manuscripts of Persian version of *Babur Namah* is kept.

The miniatures were painted by unknown artists in the last decade of the 16th century in the workshops of Akbar and they represent early but already completed so-called "Mughal" school of Indian painting.

The pages with miniatures were purchased about 50 years ago by A. V. Morozov at the fair in Nizhni Novgorod (now Gorki) from a Persian merchant who came there. Then the miniatures passed to P. I. Shchukin, well-known collector of the Eastern works of art and from the later to the Museum. The manuscript itself was not brought, only the pages with the illustrations were brought. In the Museum there are kept 57 sheets out of which 12 sheets have paintings on both sides — altogether 69 miniatures. On the reverse sides of the miniatures and often on the paintings themselves there are Persian texts of wonderful writing *nastaliq* which, as a rule, refer to the contents of the miniatures.

On the whole the painting is till now in a good condition, though there have been some damages. Out of all colour paints the white one has turned out to be not durable.

One may suppose that all or almost all illustrations are from this manuscript. Specially it refers to a part of Central Asia (former Turkestan) which is represented by 19 miniatures. Ten miniatures refer to the events in Afghanistan and 40 to India, of which 12 illustrations are devoted to the portrayal of events and 28 to flora and fauna of Northern India, where there are 12 sheets with paintings on both sides.

Judging from the peculiarities of the paintings, the miniatures appear to have been painted by not less than three artists, while the majority of illustrations were painted by the most brilliant artist.

In those places where the white paint got damaged or the work was not completed, there are seen the contours drawn by fine dark lines and details of portrayal meant for colour painting. In this the colour-painting does not generally coincide exactly with the original sketches, and in the process of colour-painting they again paint the contours. Possibly it was a joint work of three artists as introduced by Akbar; one artist was making composition by sketches—"tarrah", the second one was painting everything with colours—"aml", and the third one was a portrait painter—"chehranuma". Actually, the face of Babur in all the miniatures of the highest class is the same and apparently was painted with portrait likeness.

The egg-paints are applied with non-transparent layer on glossy and grounded paper. They do not give

such a pleasant and near musical effect as the Rajput miniatures, but, nevertheless, they are not less beautiful and intense, and they are not at all sharp in tones. The general mastership of the Mughal miniatures was higher than that of other schools due to the fact that at the court of the "Great Mughals" there was an assembly of the best masters and technical means of painting. The emperor Akbar, in whose studios this MS. was presumably illustrated, took personal interest in the workmanship.

In Mughal miniatures the medieval painting of India reached its perfect correctness and narrativeness, which were, first of all, helped by the contents relating to history and memoirs, while the Mughal miniatures cultivated portraits so widely as few other schools of painting in the world.

In this series of the miniatures, the illustrations strictly follow the text of *Babur's Diary* to the extent to which the artists could have an idea about a strange surrounding. Depicting Afghanistan and Central Asia (Babur ruled in Fergana) they used the materials from the surrounding Indian life and could not always guess all the details, apparently not being well aware of Babur's biography which they were illustrating. For example, while painting Babur's entry to Fergana after the death of his father on July 9, 1494, Babur was painted as one with a beard just like in all other miniatures, although at the time of coming to the throne in Andijhan, Babur was 11 years old.

But as a rule the miniatures very strictly follow the text of the Memoirs, correctly depicting the details and displaying sharpness of observation of the surrounding life. In particular, the characteristic features of animals and birds were correctly depicted, and also different objects and parts of costumes, general architectural character of the buildings and vegetation. Even landscape, in spite of its conditional construction and the treatment of mountains and rocks, emerge in general from nature, characterising the peculiarities of the landscape somewhere near Agra.

In this lies the great perceptive and historico-cultural importance of the miniature school which created the illustrations of *Babur Namah*. Being a soberly-prosaic school, it strives for the just and correct depicting of events and atmosphere.

Nevertheless, this is not to deny the fact that in the formally artistic sense, the Mughal miniature during the period in question was on the whole, decorative. In spite of certain voluminousness, in the painting of different figures and specially of the rocks and trees, the painting, on the whole, remains on one plane. That composition is the most conditional which is done by a conception of flatness lying vertically one above the

other. The figure of the sovereign, appearing as its thematical and often geometrical centre or its consummation, is sometimes given in an inverted perspective. Always, strictly organized, centralised, closed, laconically and carefully completed composition is a leading factor of the miniature. Generally it turns out to simple geometrical figures and to it is subordinated the placing of the plane-plans and the strict rhythm of decorative colour range, that plays an important role in the formal painting qualities of the miniature. The composition and colouring create the basis of artistic form of Mughal miniatures, where the decorative qualities are co-related to the concretely historical contents. While enlarging, this miniature becomes like a similar independent frame-picture, while the Rajput miniature is nearer to the mural-painting.

Complicated and rich colouring is characterised by the integrity and harmony of locale, legible and intensive, though not always clear, and sometimes heavy and dull tones. However, gold paint is used richly. Single-colour strokes are extremely rare, but they rhythmically alternate and are synthesised into a strict and single-colour symphony.

The model of a balanced composition and splendid colouring is the miniature "Retreat of Babur and Khan-Kuli from Ahsi" (1502-3) and "Babur's Feast in Herat in the Garden of Jehan-Ara" (1506-7).

The light is given always as an evenly diffused light from above which creates an impression of the solidity of objects.

The drawing where the main role is played by the linear contour is expressive, fine, light and rhythmical. Its finish and laconic force shows great mastership. The figures are always given in profile, the faces are indifferent even at the moment of tense battle. An Indian artist can show much by a very expressive movement, pose and gesture. This feature is also characteristic of the great wall-paintings of Ajanta, the art of dancing and of the modern paintings of India.

The general decorative character of miniatures of Akbar's time excluded the individual characteristic of faces and the emotional expressions. It also corresponded to the strictly reserved etiquette of the court life of the Mughals. Only the face of Babur is concrete and painted very finely but it is always indifferent. In the portraits of the 17th century faces had not the light of emotion.

The interesting moment in the series of these miniatures is the influence of European painting. Missionaries and other persons brought the samples of European painting and graphics to the Mughal court. As is known Akbar was very much interested in the Europeans, their technique and also in their paintings, and he sent to the Portuguese colony of Goa such artists as had a great ability to copy.

In a number of miniatures a small landscape is introduced in the upper part and it is given in the perspective of abbreviation and is separate from the plane-composition of the entire miniature, by calligraphy. Apparently, understanding the eclectic character of such an addition of a different manner of painting, the artists did not try organically to combine

into one united whole this ancient Oriental and European systems of painting and separated the landscape from the painting by the lines of the text. The original addition made the miniature more lively. In the 17th century acquaintance of the Mughal painters with European art introduced organic changes in the miniature, which did not exist at Akbar's time.

Accidentally, among the multitude there are figures of the foreigners; their costumes and arms are European but in the types of faces the difference between European and Mughal faces is slightly noticeable. Thus on the miniature "Babur on the Throne in Samarkand" after his first entry into the city in November 1497, among the people present there, there are depicted many Europeans in civil dress, and warriors. In the scene "Setting out of Babur's grandfather—Mongolian Khan from Tashkent" (1500-1) two Europeans are introduced—one with a high dark cap, apparently a Portuguese. In the illustration "Retreat of Babur from Ahsi" in the remote group of horsemen there is a European warrior in a steel helmet with white lace collar. In the upper part of the miniature "Attack of the Uzbeks of Sheibani-Khan on the people of the traitor Shah-Mansur—the Ruler of Anhoi" (1507-8) is painted a blonde in a European dress lying with wounded legs. The type of his face as well as the manner of painting of his figure sharply differ from the general style of the miniature and Mughal warriors. In the scene of the "Feast on the raft during its voyage along the tributary of Penjhira" (1519) trunks of trees and rocks are painted, as in other miniatures as well, with an attempt to show volume.

But on the whole the paintings of this series is very near to the style of the illustrations of "Babur Namah" of the British Museum. Painting, for example, of the manuscript "Anvar and Suhaili" (1570) visibly differs. Mughal school was founded approximately between 1580 and 1590, that is, by the time of the translation of "Babur Namah" in the Persian language by Khan Khanan in 1589.

Miniatures of the described series were, apparently, painted in the last decade of the 16th century, probably in Agra, because by that time the city of Akbar—Fatehpur Sikri was abandoned by him.

There are no signatures of the artists anywhere. On the upper part of the staff of the folded banner behind Babur in the miniature "Hosrov-Shah expresses his submission to Babur" it is written "Oh Allah!" In the miniature "Competition of Babur in racing" (1501-2) in the rocks of the background on the left, one stone is painted as an image of a figure of a man with a beard.

The illustrations—"Battle under the walls of the fortress near Uzgent" are of poorer quality and of a different style—where, in the colouring there appear not bright and not clear tones, and the face of Babur is somewhat different than in the majority of miniatures; types of other people are also somehow different. Specially different in respect of the poorer colouring are the miniatures called "Conference of Beks in Namaz-Gah after the death of Babur's father", "The Voyage in boats along the Ganges" also, and the episode

with a fish, where water is painted worse than in other illustrations and the faces of people are painted differently.

Certain miniatures are slightly unfinished, some others were finished subsequently. In the scenes of crocodile hunting, the heads of two hunters are only outlined and not painted with colour, as well the contours of the trees and birds in other illustrations, relating to the description of flora and fauna of India by Babur.

The later work with brush is also seen in the miniature—"Catching of antelopes" where the sky was painted for the second time with blue paint. In the scene of "Babur's Retreat from Ahsi" a leg of the horse in the rear group of horsemen is painted later.

The calligrapher of the manuscript is also unknown. Translation of all Persian texts on the pages of the Memoirs was done by P. I. Petrov—an expert in the history and culture of the countries of the Near East and Central Asia.

According to the observations of P. I. Petrov, certain peculiarities of the language in the texts indicate that this version is one of the earliest among the Persian versions of the Memoirs of Akbar's time and that it was re-written by an Indian calligrapher.

The series of the miniatures of the Museum is of profound artistic and cultural-historical value. The miniatures show us the picture of life as very bright and rich in details of events, of the lively surroundings, of architecture and nature of Northern India towards the end of the 16th century.

The great inclination for narrativeness, typical of the Mughal school, in the miniatures of this series makes them an illustrative art in the full sense of the word, in spite of their decorative qualities. The truthfulness and vitality of these miniatures is increased by a tendency towards portraiture of the main characters. That is why in the Mughal miniatures we can find the maximum development of the realistic features in medieval painting of India.

Constructively using the realistic and best qualities of ancient miniatures in general as well as ancient wall-painting, the Indian artists now create their national and typical art, which justifiably and in a highly artistic form reflects all the richness of surrounding life.

The Mughal school of painting is also a part of the legacy of India in respect of her great national art.

One of the best miniatures is "Competition of Babur in racing with his military chiefs Kanber-Ali and Kasim Bek during the evacuation of Samarkand by Babur" (1501-2). Babur outraced his Beks. The racing took place in the background of a rocky landscape. The escort and companions of Babur are painted as spectators. According to the text, 'The saddle-girth (of Babur's horse) had broken and the saddle turned round. I fell down with my head against the ground.' The moment before falling is expressed in the miniature and the end of the saddle-girth is seen there. Impetuosity and strain of the flight of the horsemen is in contrast with the calmness of the spectators. Painting of the movements here is achieved by the compositional construction; the figures of the galloping horses taken

individually seem to be still in the pose of racing. The face of Babur is painted very finely and with portrait likeness. At a distance is seen a fisherman near water—a rare subject in the given series, because generally in these miniatures people are represented only as warriors and servants.

The miniature has been completed wonderfully in respect of composition, drawing, colouring and general finish.

Wonderful is the miniature "Meeting of Babur with his cousins—Chingizids—princes Sultan-Seid-Khan and Baba-Khan near the village of Jagman" (1502). Kneeling down, the princes greet Babur on horse-back. The retinue is around them.

'...The uncle was accompanied by Sultan-Seid-Khan and Baba-Khan both between the ages of 13-14 years. He ordered the two princes to dismount, kneel down and kiss him. After the exchange of such greetings they went to the Shah-Begum'.

The figure of Babur is stressed in the composition and is its centre. All the features of the people present are painted very finely and specially the face of Babur. But the princes are painted not like youths, but as grownups. A city is seen on the horizon but it is painted in a very reduced manner. The miniature is wonderful in its colouring and richness of the whole scene.

Another miniature is also brilliant—"Hasan-Yakub's flight to Samarkand from the place of hunting" after he found out the measures taken against him by Babur (1494-5).

'Hasan-Yakub went on hunting. Knowing this he proceeded towards Samarkand'.

His figure is given in the centre of the composition and is prominent by the orange-red colour of his costume. Round him in a proper balanced order there were the figures of people and animals, rocky hills and trees. The impetuosity of the movements of the horsemen and the antelopes whom he is hunting is attained by the composition and direction of the movement in opposite sides.

The details of this miniature are amazingly vivid and concrete. In it there have been painted dogs "Buanzu", the local Himalayan breed with short hair of two kinds: for hunting in water and on the ground. Separately from them there runs a fleet-footed 'Buanzu' in a pose characteristic of the English engravings. England imported from Asia representatives of its breed, which is near to the Javanese dogs "Adiag". In the background there run antelopes—"Neelgai".

Correctness of the painting of animals in all the miniatures permits zoologists to differ: semigoats, onagers, antelopes Garna, antelopes with four horns, red wolves, hares, foxes (possibly corsairs) and others. Those not correctly depicted are unicorns, tapirs and crocodiles—gavials. The birds are painted with precision: peacocks, Monal and Big Argus (species of peacocks), pheasants, herons Goliath, and ordinary herons, hoopoes, wild pigeons, green parrots, guinea-fowls, pelicans, storks, birds of goose kind and others.

The miniature "Return of Babur to the camp after the night feast in the boat" (1519) illustrates the following part of the Diary: "I mounted the horse and

keeping the torch in hand, swinging from one side to another galloped at once from the river to the camp".

The miniature is wonderful according to its laconic composition. The scene is given in three vertical planes: in the middle one—along the green riverside there rides Babur, painted in reverse perspective and a woman who accompanies him. In the lower plane—a river with a steep bank and near it a richly furnished boat with oarsmen, and on the upper plane—hills with trees and a separate landscape with buildings on the horizon, the latter separated by the lines from the text.

In this miniature the artist had reached an exquisite harmony of colouring.

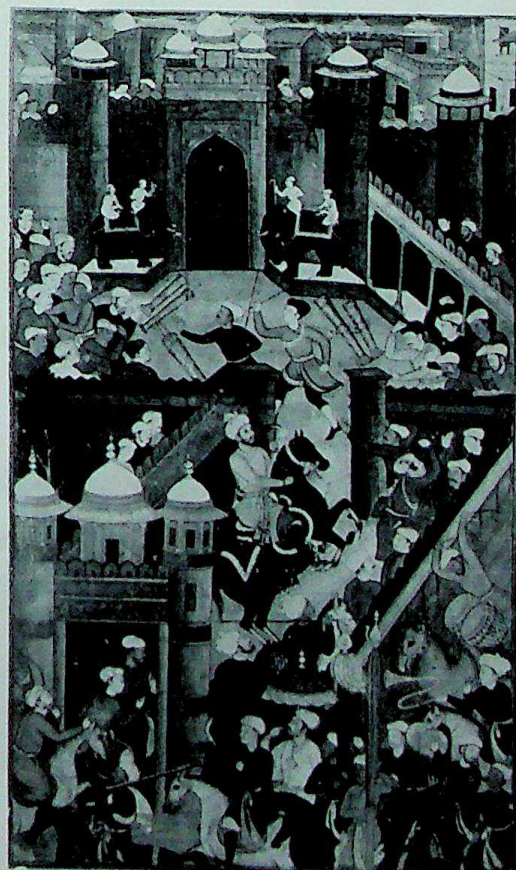
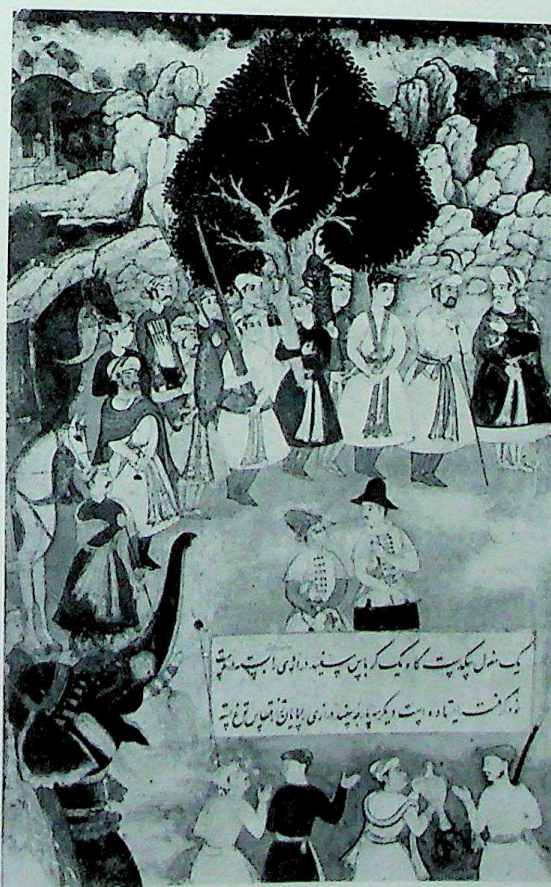
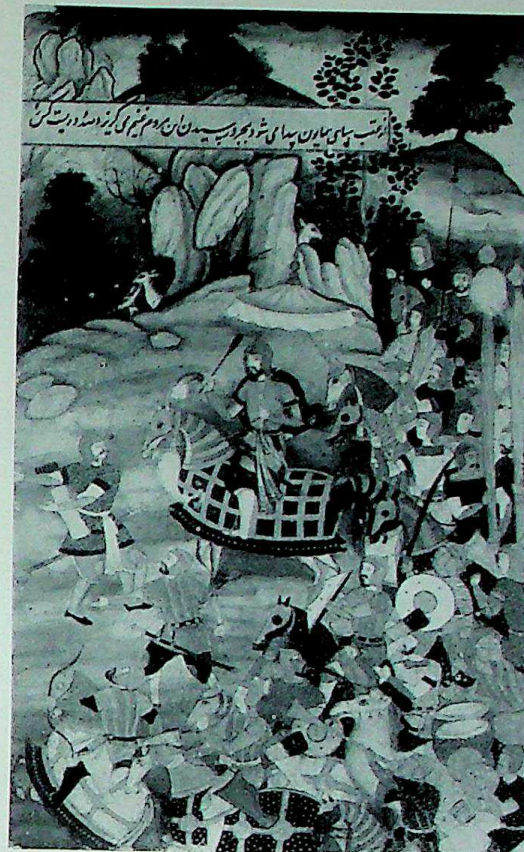
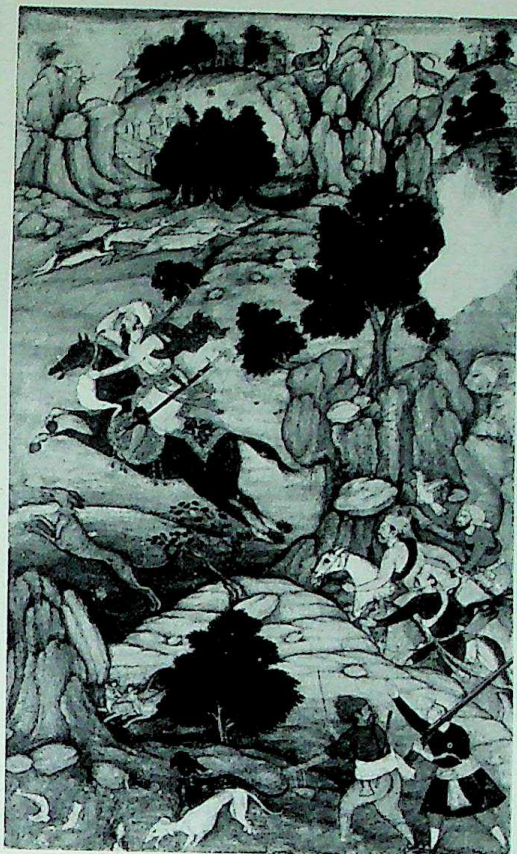
"Triumphal entry of Babur into the palace of Sultan Ibrahim Lodi after the capture of Agra." (1525-6). Babur in a yellow dress and white turban enters

the gates, accompanied by his retinue and the band. The runners clear the way for him in the crowd. Spectators are round him. The figure of Babur, painted in reverse perspective, is the centre of the composition that is built in the form of an octagon. Babur's pose is expressive, but the face is motionless and indifferent. The colour tones of the miniature are pleasant and harmonical though not so rich as on other illustrations. The text on the reverse of the miniature does not refer to the subject painted on it. In the Hyderabad manuscript it is written: "I entered Agra after noon-prayer on Thursday and hurried towards the palace of Sultan Ibrahim".

Such is the series of brilliant miniatures of Akbar's time when the newly compiled Mughal style introduced a new stream of art into the medieval painting of India.



1. *Emir Hasan Yaqub fleeing from a Hunt to Samarkand. Event took place between 2-10-1494 and 20-9-1495 (900 year of Hijra).*
2. *Humayun-Mirza, Son of Babur, starts on an Expedition against Hamid Khan. Event between 18-10-1525 and 7-10-1526 (932 year of Hijra).*
3. *Uzbek prisoners of war being brought to Babur after the battle of Huban. Event of 1499-1500 (905 year of Hijra).*
4. *Capture of the Fortress of Bajaur by Babur's troops. Event between 3-1-1519 and 22-12-1519 (925 year of Hijra).*
5. *Babur returns to Camp after a Night Feast in a Boat. Event between 3-1-1519 and 22-12-1519 (925 year of Hijra).*
6. *Setting forth of Babur's Grandfather—a Mongolian Khan—preparation for the ceremony with the banner. Event between 17-7-1501 and 6-7-1502 (907 year of Hijra).*
7. *Babur triumphantly enters Palace of Sultan Ibrahim Lodi in Agra after capture of the Town. Event of 1526 (932 year of Hijra).*
8. *Reconciliation of Babur with Sultan Ali-Mirza at the Kohlik near Samarkand. Event between 21-9-1495 and 8-9-1496 (901 year of Hijra).*
9. *Arrival of Babur at Andijan (in Fergana) after receiving news about his father's death. Event of June 9, 1494.*
10. *Babur and two of his Chieftains—Kamber Ali and Kasim-Beg—Racing during their Flight from Samarkand. Event of 1501-1502 (907 year of Hijra).*
11. *Fruit Trees and a Hare. Illustration to Babur's description of flora and fauna of Ind.a.*
12. *Babur feasts in Badi-uz-zaman—Mirza's "Jahan-Ara" Garden in Herat. Event between 24-5-1506 and 12-5-1507 (912 year of Hijra).*
13. *Babur visits a Garden which he bought at Istakf near Kabul. Event between 14-6-1504 and 3-6-1505 (910 year of Hijra).*
14. *Babur Changes Horses during Retreat from Asha. Event between 7-7-1502 and 25-6-1503 (908 year of Hijra).*
15. *Uzbeks attack the messengers bearing gifts from Shah-Mansur, the Governor of Andhoi. Event between 13-5-1507 and 1-5-1508 (913 year of Hijra).*
16. *Feast of Babur in the "White Garden" in Herat at the Palace of Muzaffer-Mirza. Event of 1506.*
17. *Babur on a Raft floating down Panjhra's Tributary. Event between 3-1-1519 and 22-12-1519 (925 year of Hijra).*
18. *Ceremonial Reception of the Beks by Babur in the Palace of Sultan Ibrahim in Agra on the occasion of the Distribution of Awards on the capturing of Agra. Event of 932 year of Hijra.*
19. *Fruit Trees and Birds of India: Illustration to Babur's description of the flora and fauna of India.*
20. *Battle between Babur's troops and Tembel near the Fortress of Pushtharan. Event between 8-8-1499 and 27-5-1500 (905 year of Hijra).*
21. *Same as 20 in the same year.*
22. *Seige of Samarkand by Babur. Event between 9-9-1496 and 29-8-1497 (902 year of Hijra).*

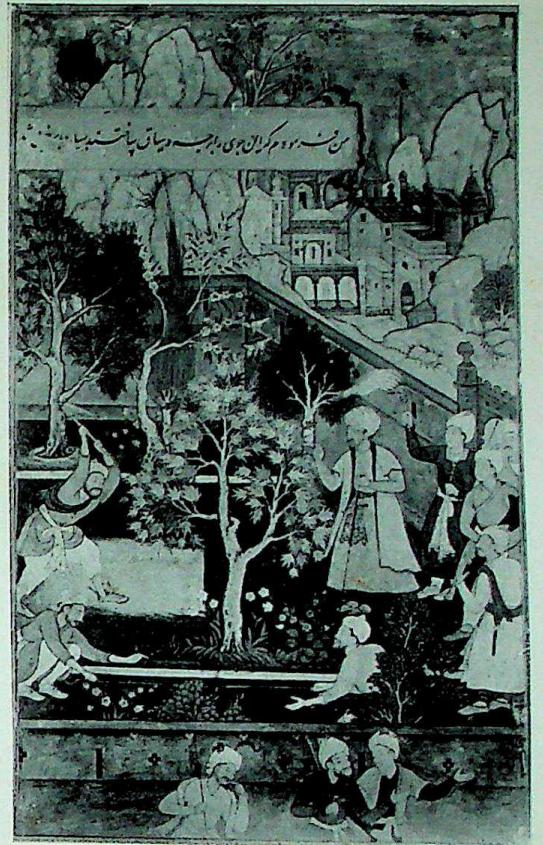




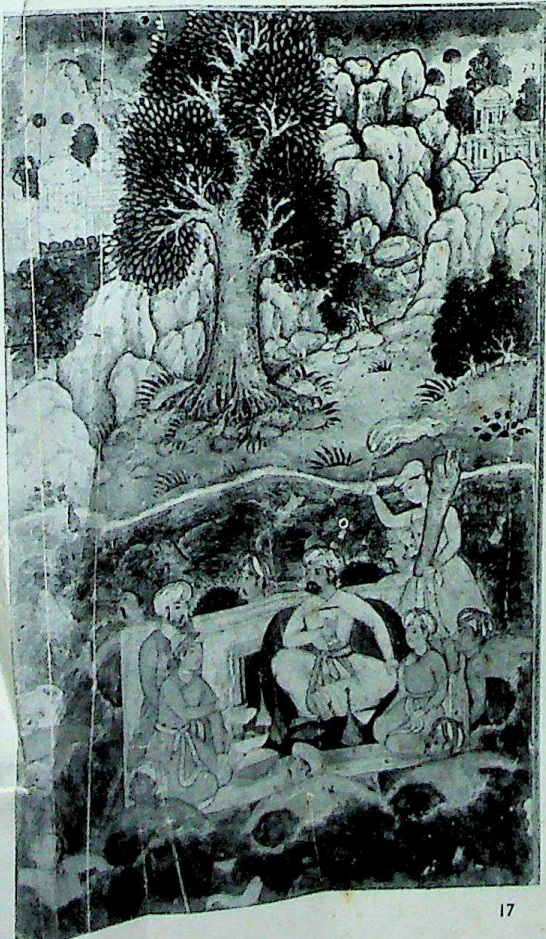
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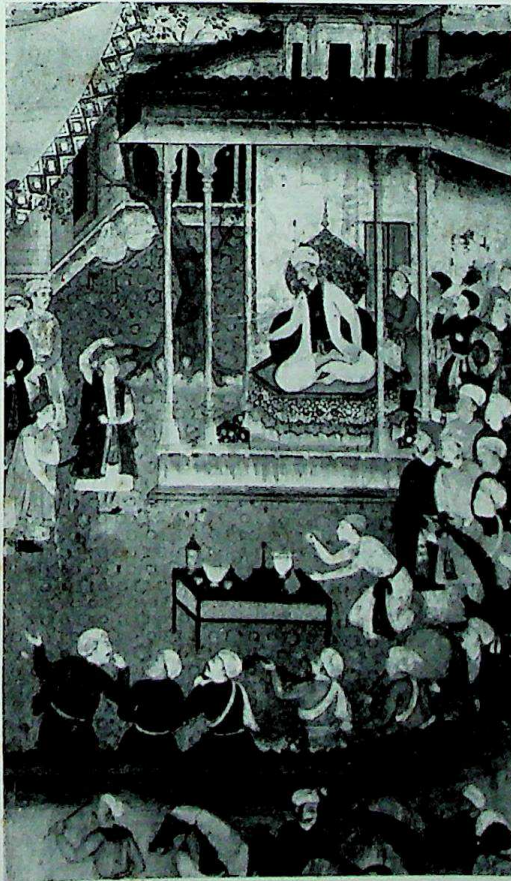
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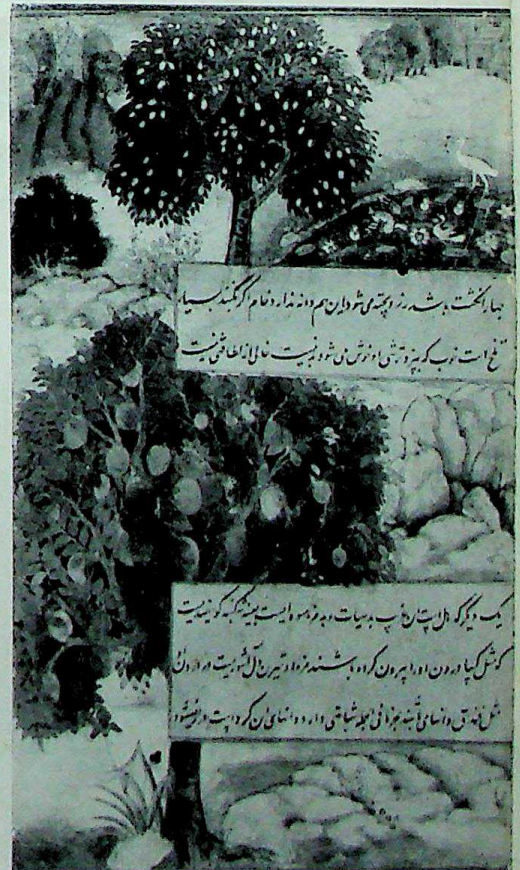
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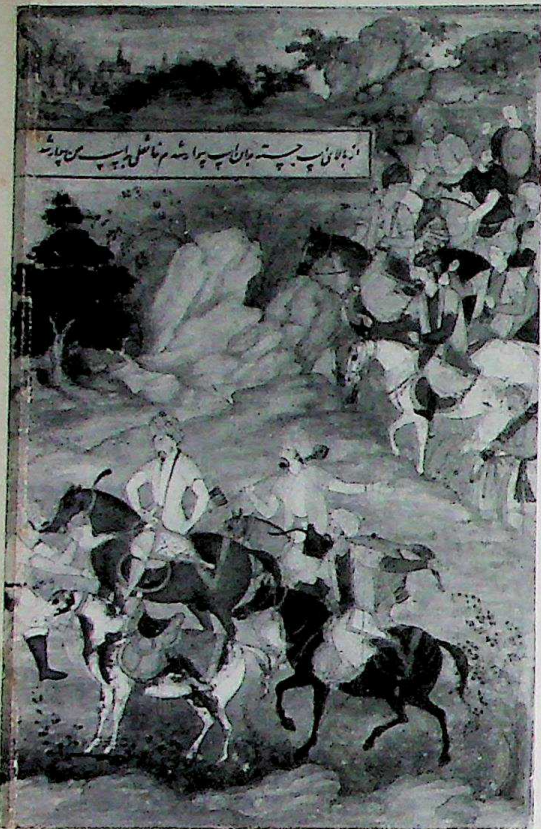
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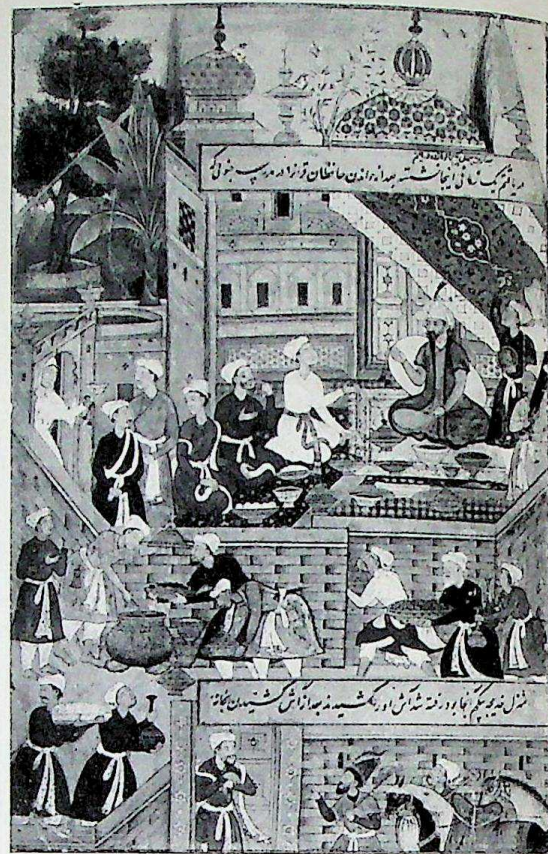
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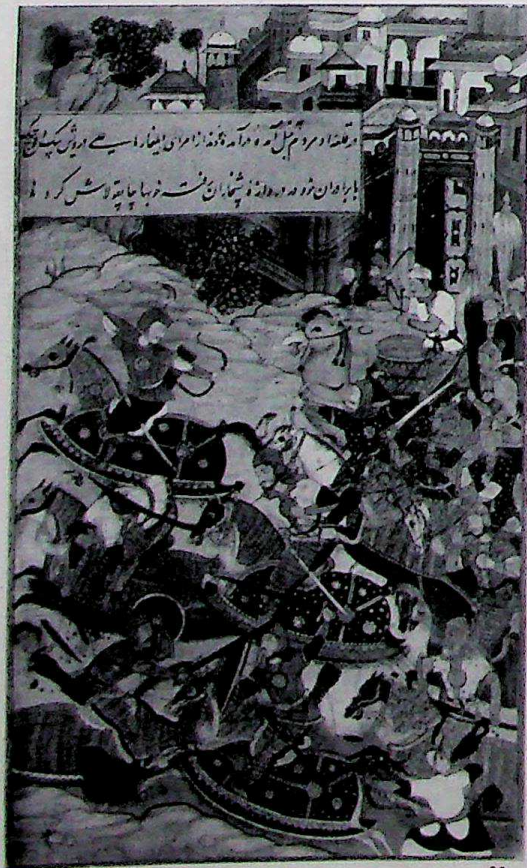
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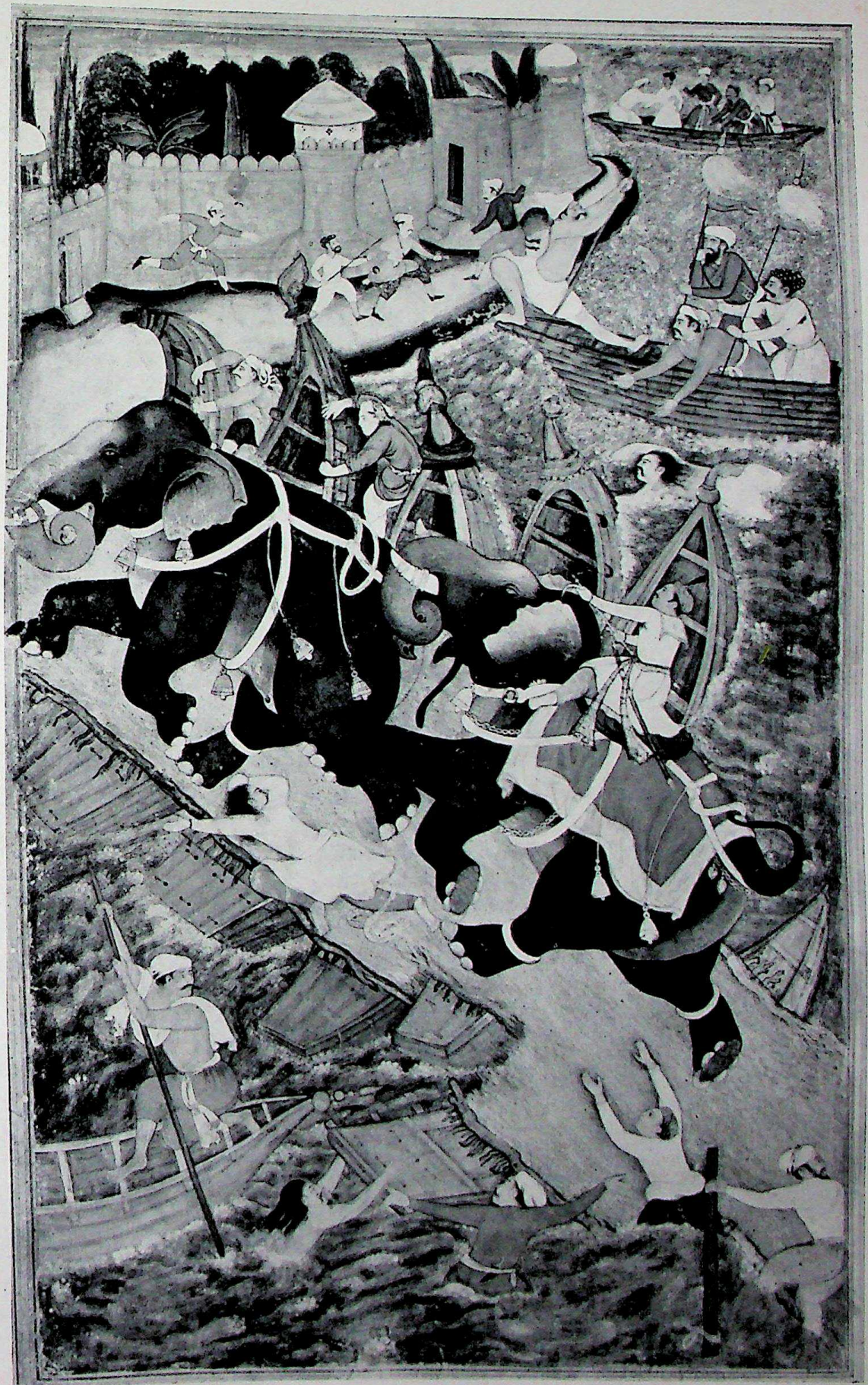


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4. Scenes from the Akbar Namah



1. Akbar on an elephant pursuing another elephant across a bridge of boats in A.D. 1561 (Outline by Basawan, painting by Chattrar, c. A.D. 1600. By courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, London).



2. Akbar hunting near Delhi in A.D. 1568 (Outline by Mukund, painting by Manohar, c. A.D. 1600).



3. Akbar lost while hunting near Tulwandi, Multan, in A.D. 1571, is found in exhausted condition (Outline of painting by Mahesh, portraits by Kesu, c. A.D. 1600).

5. Miniatures from a Manuscript of the *Diwan-i-Hafiz*

by Stuart C. Welch, Jr.

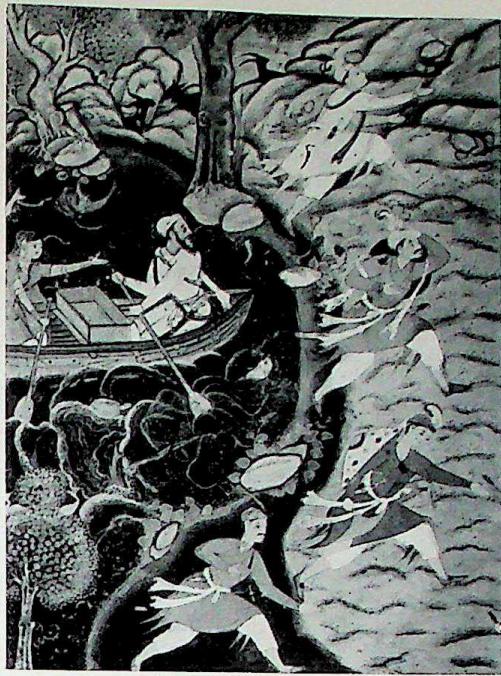
By the last decade of the sixteenth century Akbar had established the Mughal Empire sufficiently to devote more time to the arts of peace. Despite his supposed illiteracy, more fine illustrated manuscripts have come down to us from this era than from any other phase of Mughal history. Perhaps Akbar shared the vice of a good many bibliophiles, and simply liked to look at the pictures. Without facing the bugbear of whether Akbar could read and write, or not, one can be certain that his court was highly literate, even literary. Six of the nine members of Akbar's *Nauratan*, or nine gems, the emperor's chosen companions, were poets, and all were admired for their ability to turn a phrase. Abul Fazal, the hero-worshipping author of the *Akbar Nama* tells us that the emperor was read aloud to daily, sometimes in the Harem where part of the Imperial Library was kept. It is quite likely that the splendid small *Diwan* of the Persian poet Hafiz (1320-89), acquired by the National Museum of India as part of the Rampur State Library Loan, was one of those favoured volumes. It is small, the text measuring only six inches by three and one quarter inches written in two columns of excellent *nastaliq* on tan, polished paper. Many of the borders, which are of various tones, are ornamented with drawings in gold. Although this poet's works are seldom illustrated, the Delhi version contains eleven miniatures as well as a number of rich illuminations. Several of the paintings bear contemporary attributions from some of the best-known artists of the Akbar period.

The earliest manuscripts made for the Mughals in India are barely discernible from Persian work; one recognises them by such indirect means as the costumes and inscriptions, and the actual materials used, which differ somewhat from those of Persian manuscripts. Gradually the style changed, and indigenous elements mingled with other foreign influences to form the style with which we are familiar from the *Dastan-i-Amir-Hamza* (Fig. 1), a huge series of illustrations to the apocryphal adventures of Hamza, an uncle of the Prophet, undertaken during the middle of the century. According to Abul Fazal, there were to be one thousand four hundred of these giant "miniatures" painted on cloth in the manner of Tibetan and Nepalese pictures. Although one can trace Persian, European and even Kashmiri and Nepalese characteristics in them, no one could deny the existence of a special Hamza style. A vigorous, blustering rhythm pervades them, recalling a contemporary writer's words, "even inanimate objects look as though they had life". Already the two dimensional treatment of space found in Persian work has given way to the indication of depth. Figures and setting are becoming naturalistic. Genre subjects abound,

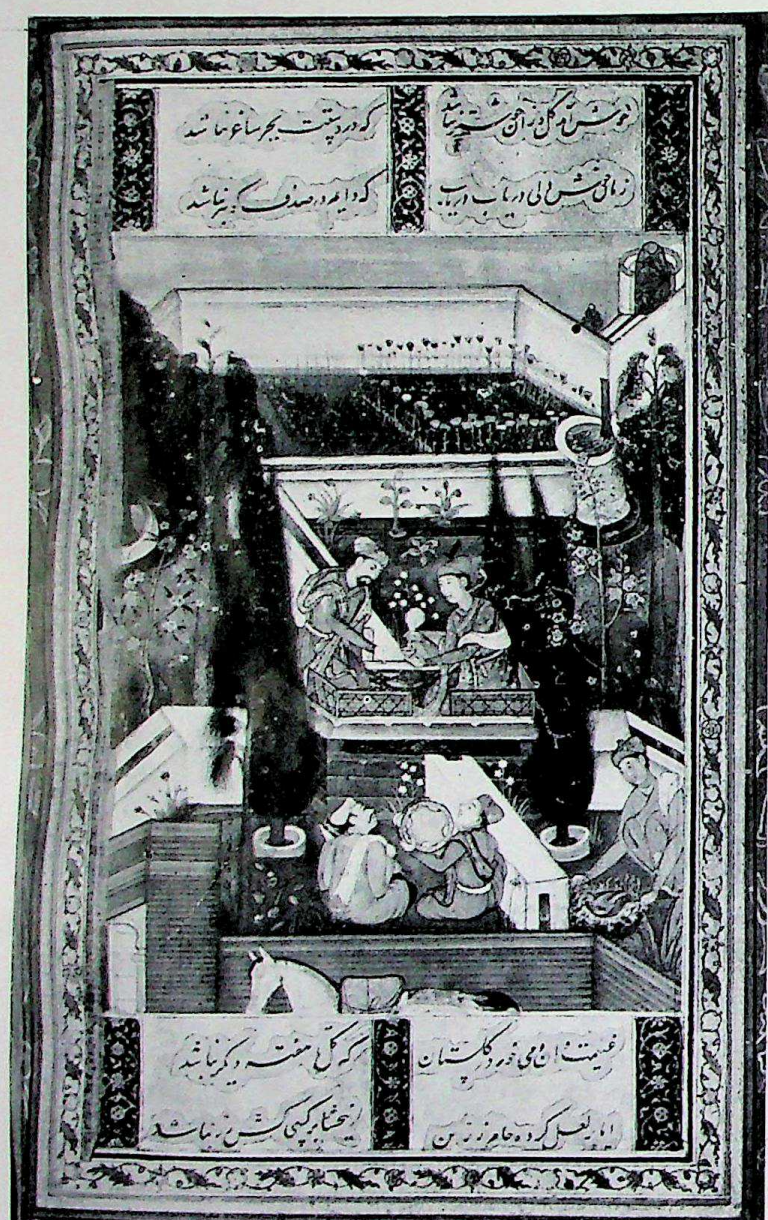
descending in part from the teachings of Mir Sayyid Ali, a Persian painter brought to India by Akbar's father. One can imagine that this closer approximation of the real world appealed to the hard-headed Mughals, and it is almost too easy to claim a prototype in India's earlier wall paintings.

During the late sixties and seventies, the Hamza style gave way to a calmer manner. Depth was shown more convincingly; transitions between foreground, middle and background eased, and the paper cut-out effect gradually disappeared except in the work of the more backward painters. Drawing became still more realistic. A new type of artist developed, the painter-naturalist. Although somewhat later in date, the *Noah's Ark* (Fig. 2), from a lost manuscript, contains a veritable zoo of God's creatures, as well as a few mythological ones for good measure. Even the sea monsters are credible, and most of the birds and beasts are both well described and animated.

By the last decade of the sixteenth century, several categories of illustrated Mughal manuscripts had come into being. The *Diwan* at Delhi is one of a small number of books of poetry that have survived, the only one that I know in an Indian collection, and one of the best preserved of all. These volumes are invariably small (our manuscript is about average in size) and made for the greatest possible enjoyment; despite the loss of its original binding which must have been an elegant one, elaborately tooled in arabesque designs, this book is a pleasure to see and touch. One can easily understand that such items were created only at vast expense and after many months of labour by a small army of craftsmen and artists. Figure 3 transports Hafiz's poem into the world of Akbar. Two young men, dressed as Mughal courtiers, vie with one another to see who can dance longest. It is nearly morning. One of the guests has doubled up in sleep, another muffles a yawn, a third drowzes, and the last seems to wonder at the waste of energy. In every respect this is a brilliant little painting; the subject could not be more clearly expressed, characterisations are remarkable, and the composition, dominated by the swinging forms of the dancers, excites the eye. The frantic activity of the foreground contrasts with a peaceful landscape, evocative of the coolness and bird sounds of dawn. A less ambivalent tale of the pleasures of a garden, music, food and wine, things that were symbolic of higher values to Hafiz. Here the painter seems as much interested in the technique of watering a garden as in the people. The result is, perhaps, a less fine illustration, but one that asks us to share the artists' enthusiasm for flowers and trees. A richly accoutred young man (Fig. 5) holds an



1. The escape of Mirdukht, from the Dastan-i-Amir-Hamza (after Gluck).
2. Noah's Ark (By courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution, Freer Gallery of Art, U.S.A.).
3. Contest from Diwan-i-Hafiz (By courtesy of the National Museum, India).



4. A Garden Scene, from the Diwan-i-Hafiz
(By courtesy of the National Museum,
India.)
5. Arrival of a Guest, from the Diwan-i-Hafiz
(By courtesy of the National Museum,
India).

7. Court scene, from the Diwan-i-Hafiz (By courtesy of The National Museum, India).



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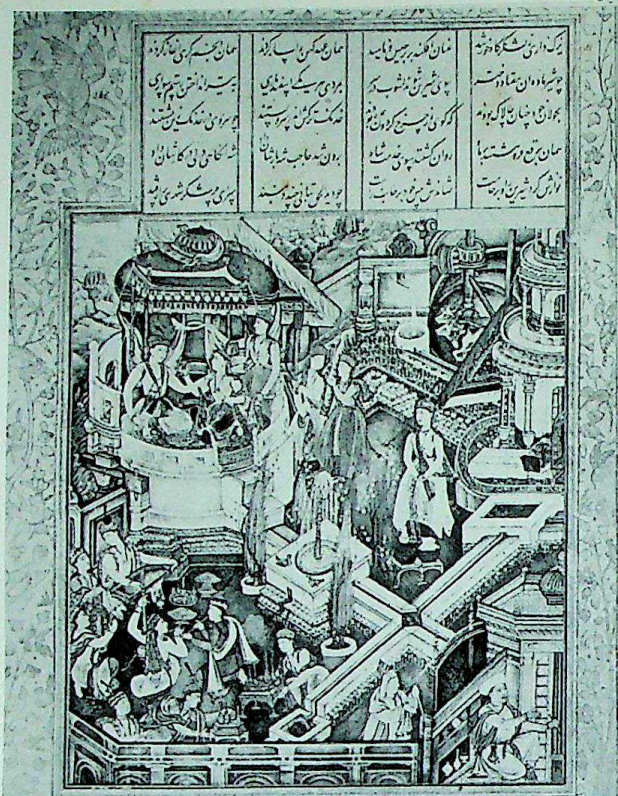
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6. An old shepherd and his flock, from the Diwan-i-Hafiz (By courtesy of The National Museum, India).



8

8. *A Beggar and a King*, from a *Baharistan of Jami* (By courtesy of the Bodleian Library, Oxford).



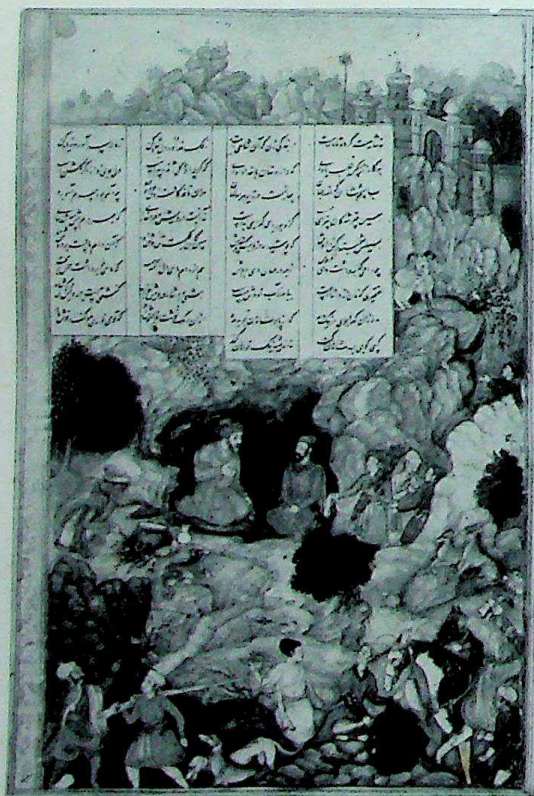
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9. *Garden Party*, from the *Khamsa of Nizami* (from the collection of Sir George Warner).



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10. *The siege of Ranthambhor*, from the *Akbar Namah* (By courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London).



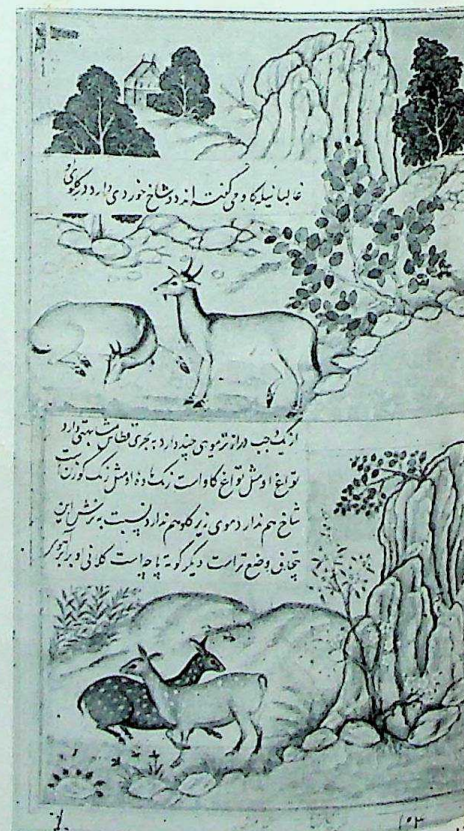
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11. *Iskandar visiting the Hermit*, from the *Khamsa of Nizami* from The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City).



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12. *Sesha-naga restores Arjuna's head*, from a *Razm Namah* (By courtesy of H. H. The Maharaja of Jaipur).



13

13. *Nilgai and hog deer*, from the *Babur Namah* (By courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution, Freer Gallery of Art, U.S.A.).

arrow aloft as he arrives from his journey. According to the text, he combines the charms of both Khusrau and Shirin, and the painter has obviously strived to endow his hero with suitable qualities.

Painted in tans, grays and blues, the old shepherd and his flock (Fig. 6) is one of the most appealing miniatures in the manuscript. The artist shows us that grazing sheep take on the mysterious form of folded hills, while rocks and mountains resemble animals, transmutations of form in keeping with the poet's style of writing.

Farrukh Beg, who painted the prince with his court (Fig. 7), was a Persian trained artist whose style is one of the most individual we know. He was able to adapt his native manner to the Mughal taste without becoming awkward, unlike a number of his compatriots. Here, the flatness of forms, patterning of trees and landscape, and graceful weaving of line through the scarves and other shapes of the figures, differ from the other miniatures, which are more emphatically Indian. Farrukh Beg could not forget the Persian conviction that a two dimensional surface must be decorated with two dimensional shapes.

A *Baharistan* of Jami (1414–1486), another Persian poet, in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, is one of the best known of the few manuscripts comparable to this *Diwan-i-Hafiz*. Written at Lahore in 1595, it is slightly larger than our volume, but contains only six paintings set in even more elaborately decorated borders. "A beggar and a king" (Fig. 8) bears a certain resemblance to the equestrian scene from the *Hafiz*, especially in fineness of workmanship, composition, and representation of atmospheric effects. Another closely related manuscript is the *Khamsa* of Nizami (1141–1203) in the library of the late Dyson Perrins, dated 1596. A garden scene (Fig. 9) from this source might well be a larger precursor of our Figure 4. In each case, the emphasis is on the garden rather than upon the *dramatis personae*, and each is designed with a play of diagonal and horizontal lines. A dispersed copy of Shahi's *Diwan*, the Bodleian Library's small, somewhat earlier (c. 1590–95) *Laila and Majnun* of Nizami, a few scattered pages from various sources, and the British Museum *Nafahat al Uns* of Jami, dated 1602, complete the group. On the basis of these other manuscripts, it is unlikely that the National Museum's *Diwan* is very much earlier or later than 1597.

Historical manuscripts form another strand of book painting at this time. Outstanding are three large (with paintings approximately fourteen by eight and a half inches) and generously illustrated but now fragmentary examples, one in India, another in Iran, and a third in England. These appear to have formed a series, tracing the history of the Mughals from the time of Adam and Eve through the Mongol, Timurid, and early Mughal periods, and finally up to the last years of Akbar. The first book, a *Jami al Tawarikh* of Rashid ad Din, is in the Gulistan Library at Teheran. Of approximately the same size and type is the *Tarikh i Khanadan i Timuriyah* in the Oriental Public Library, Patna, which describes events in the lives of Babur and Humayun as well as Timur. Last of the group is the *Akbar-Namah* of

Abul Fazal at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (Fig. 10). Not surprisingly this is the most exciting and varied of the lot. Akbar must have been keenly interested in its production, and the episodes and personalities described were still fresh in the painters' minds. Almost every miniature is enlivened by curious, often slightly malicious, detail. Although several smaller historical manuscripts have come down to us, none can compare with these three.

One might liken these histories to symphonic works for full orchestra as compared to the "chamber music" of the poetical group. Physically, the histories are bulkier (the section of the *Akbar-Namah* in London contains one hundred and sixteen illustrations!), the painting is broader, the brushwork less fine, and their success depends rather upon total effect than niceties of detail. At their best, these historical subjects are among the most exciting survivals of Mughal India, but occasionally the effort entailed by so vast a project reveals itself, and the paintings verge on monotony. Two close-up photographs (Figs. 11 and 12) show details from the *Akbar-Namah* and Shahi's *Diwan*, the complete miniature of which measures less than five inches in height. Each photograph is enlarged more than three times. They were both taken under the same conditions and show an equal area. Figure 11 represents two of the oxen in Figure 10, one of the most impressive pages of the *Akbar-Namah*. Although this painting is finer in treatment than most pages of the historical series, one can easily detect the difference in scale between it and Figure 12, from the *Diwan* of Shahi. Here, muted gold is used to portray the horse, and the rider's pale blue costume is lovingly modelled in almost invisible strokes of the same substance. Dynamic, expressive line has been replaced by a subtle, almost sweet, truly miniaturistic style, better suited to a book made for intimate, leisurely reading than for the state archive.

In keeping with the smaller scale and minute workmanship of the poetical manuscripts, the paintings were assigned to one man rather than to a pair or group. This was not the case with the historical projects, where often the outline was the work of a master painter, the colouring executed by an assistant, and the portraits by still a third "specialist". Presumably, a gilder and illuminator added further but anonymous hands to the collaboration. Contemporary sources have given us a list of over one hundred painters of the Akbar period. Thanks to the attributions written beneath many of the surviving paintings, probably by the clerk in charge, we are enabled to connect some of these names with individual styles. Literary records, also of the period, give us the further advantage of knowing a few of the painters who were most admired. Abul Fazal, for instance, tells us that Basawan was preferred by some to Daswanth, traditionally the greatest of the Akbari painters, and that he specialised in outlines, portraits and blending colour. A miniature at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City (Fig. 13) can be given to this painter on the basis of other pictures, despite the loss of the margin that once contained the attribution. It is from a *Khamsa* of Nizami, perhaps the same copy referred to above. Basawan, in this case

working unassisted, was responsible for composition, colouring and portraits. Presumably, this urged the painter to use his talents to the full. There can be little doubt that this is one of the happiest solutions to the problem of relating illustration to text.

One could not pretend to have fitted the National Museum's *Hafiz* into the scheme of known Mughal manuscripts without making some mention of the books of Hindu subjects and the natural histories. An outstanding example of the first category is the *Razm-Namah* (Fig. 14), a Persian rendering of the *Mahabharata*, in the collection of the Maharaja of Jaipur. Translations of Hindu classics were but one of the means whereby Akbar tried to increase the understanding between Hindus and Muslims. As large in format as the major historical books, it is also by painters working in harmonious collaboration. As most of Akbar's painters were Hindus, it is no wonder that this set of pictures contains just the elements of imaginative, religious intensity so often missed in Mughal art.

Although from the South Kensington manuscript of

the *Babur-Namah*, the autobiography of Akbar's grandfather, Figure 15 is typical of the natural history subjects of the last decade of the century. Babur and Jehangir were the two Mughal emperors most interested in flora and fauna; our miniature recalls both for it is an early work of Mansur, who was to become the most celebrated *animalier* of all of Jehangir's painters.

In 1641, a Spanish priest who had access to the Imperial library estimated it at twenty-four thousand volumes, many of which must have come down from the Akbar period. Considering the number of painters employed, many manuscripts were certainly illustrated, although there can never have been many of the standard of those we have been discussing. Today, after the onslaught of white ants, damp, and human savagery, Mughal manuscripts are excessively rare. We are especially fortunate that the *Diwan-i-Hafiz* has found its way to the National Museum of India where it can be seen in the company of other major treasures from India's past.

¹The author is grateful to the National Museum of India for permission to publish miniatures from this manuscript, which he later hopes to describe in more detail for their bulletin. He would especially like to thank Dr. Vikram Singh for his assistance.

He is also indebted to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, the Smithsonian Institution, Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, and an anonymous private collector for allowing him to reproduce paintings in their possession.

Bibliographical Note

Mughal Miniatures by Rai Krishnadasa, Lalit Kala Akadami, Series of Indian Art. General Editor: Karl Khandalavala. 1955. Rs. 8/12/-.

Since the publication of the pioneer research works of Sir Thomas Arnold, Laurence Binyon and Percy Brown (*Court Painters of the Great Mughals*, and *Indian Painting under the Mughals*), there has been very scanty research into the problems of Mughal art.

Of course, the basic formulations of these writers in regard to the whole development were sound and conscientiously worked out. Therefore, the need for further elaboration lay rather in the differentiations of the styles under each of the great Mughals, rather than in the restatement of the general theme. To an extent this lacunae was filled by the occasional essays of Mr. N. C. Mehta (*Studies in Indian Painting*), and through the researches of Mr. J. V. S. Wilkinson in publications like the *Shah-Namah* and the *Anwar-I-Suhali*, published by the India Society, as well as in the three volumes of the Chester Beatty collection, brought out under Wilkinson's supervision by the Oxford University Press.

There has been, however, a complete dearth of writing of any significance on Mughal art in India, until the Lalit Kala Akadami brought out the first in the series of their publications on Indian Art, the brochure, *Mughal Miniatures*, with text and notes by Rai Krishnadasa and an introduction by Prof. Humayun Kabir.

The monograph is a model of art publishing in our country, which has set an exalted tone for the whole Lalit Kala series of Indian art, edited by Mr. Karl Khandalavala.

The colour reproductions are most precisely rendered, evoking almost the exact nuances of the originals (we reproduce two fine examples in this number, one entitled 'Scene from the *Hamzah-Namah*' on the cover, and another entitled 'An illustration from the *Babur-Namah*'). The layout of the book is simple and pleasing, except for the type used for the title on the cover.

There was no room, ostensibly, in such a book for a detailed discussion of the relations of pre-Mughal Indian paintings with the emergent Indo-Persian style, and the exact relationship between the Mughal developments of the 17th-18th centuries with the provincial schools. But these problems are arresting enough to engage the attention of scholars for a long time to come.

Also, the wealth of illustrated material, which is still lying about in the various collections both in India and abroad, has yet to be given to the public.

Meanwhile, students of Indian Art History must be grateful to the Lalit Kala Akadami for sponsoring the sumptuous series of which the brochure on *Mughal Miniatures* was the first.

6. Miniatures from a Razm Namah

by Ernst-Cohn-Wiener

Of the literary works illustrated in Akbar's time, the greatest interest must always attach to the *Razm Namah*. It is a compilation from the Mahabharata in the Persian language for the use of Akbar himself and his courtiers. But the illustrations of these purely Indian legends are painted by Hindu artists as well as by Muhammadans, and are documents of the great political problem of Akbar's rule, the reconciliation of the two communities. The fact that there were no illustrations of the Mahabharata in earlier times, but that they had to be new creations based entirely on the artist's own imagination and creative power, gives to such miniatures a special artistic value.

Hence it is interesting that there exists a number of unpublished miniatures from a copy of the *Razm Namah*, belonging to Akbar's time which is not mentioned in works of Mughal art. Thirtytwo of them, by far the greatest part, belong to the Picture Gallery of Baroda, three single leaves are in the Prince of Wales Museum at Bombay, which exhibit twelve others belonging to Sir Akbar Hydari's collection, while a single miniature seems to be in the Museum at Boston. The size is much smaller than that of the famous Jaipur *Razm Namah*, the average picture measuring about 8.1/2 by 4.1/2 inches; but the delicacy of the design and the richness in unconventional ideas gives these miniatures a special value.

As usual in Akbar's illustrated manuscripts, the work was distributed among a comparatively large number of painters. The reason was certainly the usual impatience of *Grands Seigneurs* to have their art works delivered in the shortest possible time. In the Baroda miniatures, the names occurring most frequently are Ahmad Kashmiri (on Nos. 468, 475, 477), Bahan (on Nos. 472, 478, 479), Bhawani (on Nos. 463, 483), Bulaki (on Nos. 470, 480), Dhannu (on Nos. 460, 461, 473), Jamshid (on Nos. 458, 471), Napak (on Nos. 465, 469), while fourteen other painters painted each a single leaf.

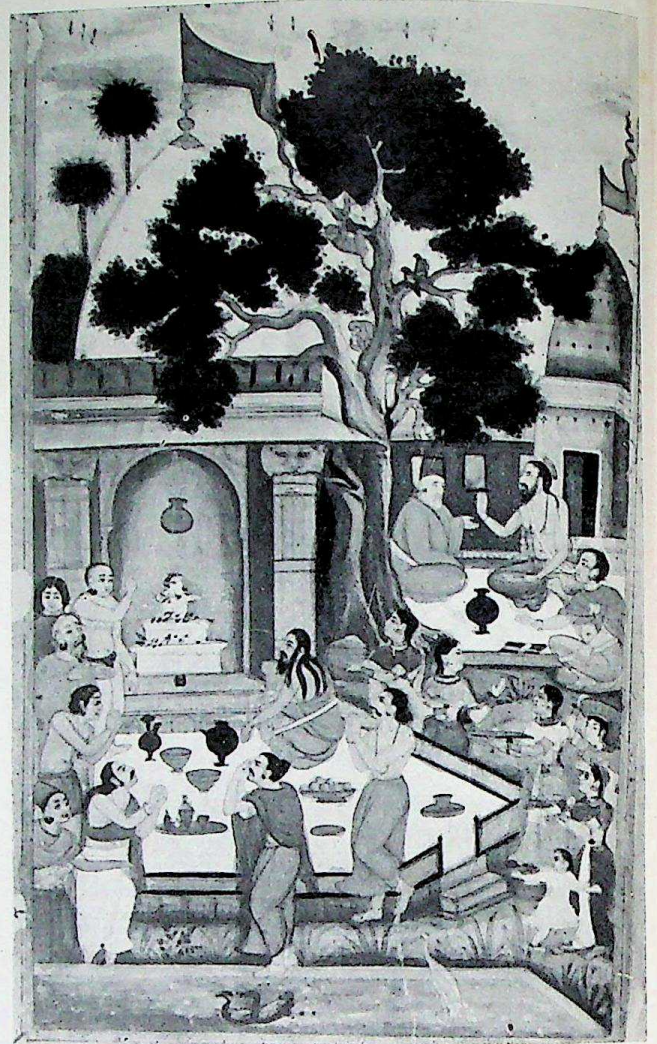
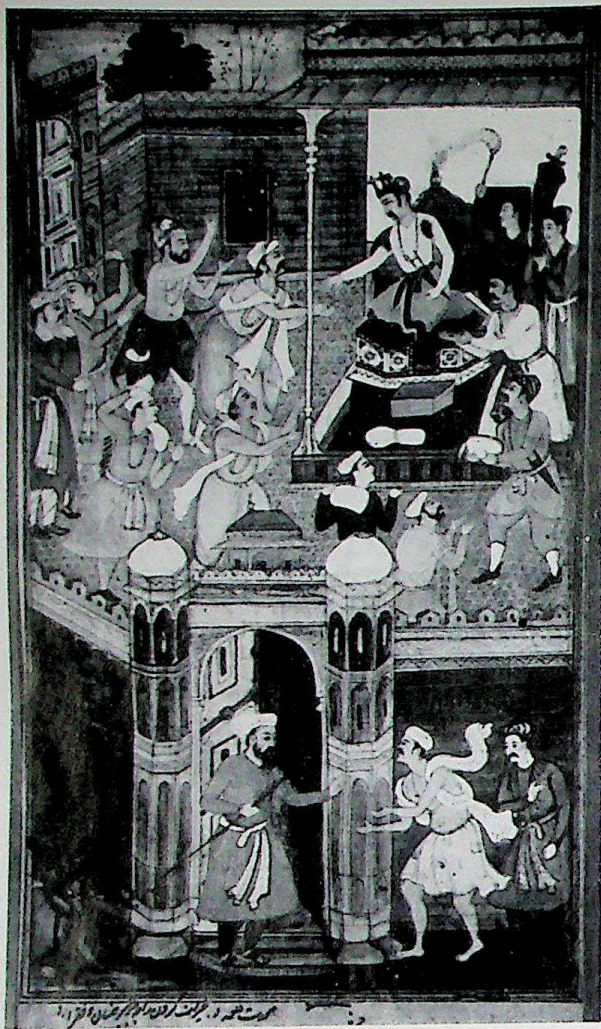
Of these artists, five are well known to us. They are Dhannu, Bhanwari, Narain, Madho and Pars. These painters shared with others in the works of the famous *Waqiat-i-Baburi* (British Museum, Or. 3714).

As must be expected of so great a number of artists, some continued the old tradition while others show already the traces of further development. The composition, the high perspective, the appearances of the landscapes, houses, towers and tents depend clearly on the tradition of Timurid art. Some of the pictures, e.g. Figure 1, are especially influenced by Bihzad, who was so highly praised by Akbar's chronicler, Abul Fazal. But, on the other hand, traces of a new artistic development are clearly visible. Some of the painters tried to break the fetters of convention and

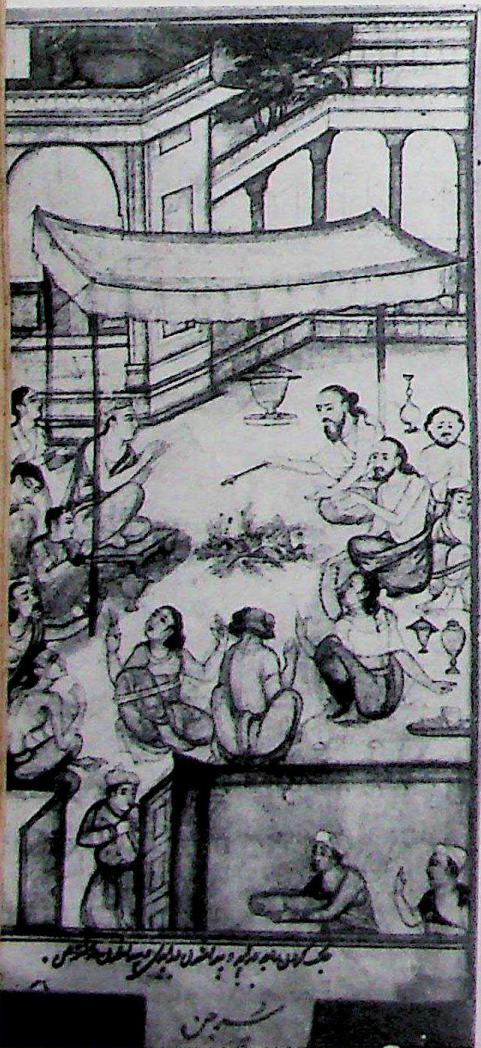
studied the surrounding life very intensively. It is surprising to see with how much zeal the ceremonies of the Hindu religion were studied and with how much minuteness they were rendered. The Horse Sacrifice and Vasuki Yagna (Nos. 461 and 473) by Dhannu, King Drupada's Sacrifice by Surju (Fig. 2), and the Worship of the Shiva Lingam by Bahan (Fig. 3) are most interesting documents of Hindu religion. The accuracy goes as far even as to show the correct kind of tree leaves in the decoration of a canopy. Different kinds of Sadhus are truly portrayed. One may well trace the origin of the well-known pictures of Fakir meetings back to such works.

That there were really great artists working among the painters of our manuscript is shown, for instance, by the picture of a hunting train which happens to come across a hermit's hut (Fig. 4). The contrast between the noisy, gaily dressed crowds and the dark trees in which birds are fearlessly dwelling is very expressive. The development of landscape painting is obvious. Most of the painters stick to the high perspective and singled out flowers and leaves on the trees which were then traditional. But some add already a background in correct perspective to a foreground in traditional style. Once a landscape appears which shows the deep aerial perspective of a real forest correctly painted and filled with clustering trees, a task clearly based on European models (Fig. VI). The greatest painter in our *Razm Namah* may have been one Surju, who painted No. 481, "King Drupada's Sacrifice" (Fig. 2). He studied the different kinds of human anatomy, fat bodies as well as thin ones almost reduced to skeletons, and such different positions as front view, back view and three-quarter view. He even tried to foreshorten correctly. His very delicate colouring shows that he was fully aware of the peculiar style of pencil drawing. Among the generally too gaily coloured miniatures his work is of greatest economy possible. Experiments like these show that there was a stage in Mughal art like that of Luca Signorelli in Umbria, but which unfortunately did not lead to any consequences.

Comparison with the miniatures of the *Waqiat-i-Baburi* (British Museum, Or. 3714), some of which were, as mentioned before, painted by the same artists as ours, demonstrates that ours must be considerably younger. For instance, in the former, Dhannu painted the laying out of a garden composed of minute single forms in an almost inverted perspective, while his pictures in the latter show knowledge of the real appearance of a landscape. Hence it appears certain time must have passed between the two of them. From these observations and from the style of dress it appears that the Baroda *Razm Namah* must belong to the later Akbar's time. An illustrated *Zafer Namah* dated 1600 confirms this opinion.



3



2



4

1. King Udhisthira giving alms, painted by Jamshed.
2. King Drupada performs a sacrifice, painted by Surju.
3. Shiva worship, painted by Bahan.
4. A farmer aspires to attain heaven, painted by Ahmed Kashmiri.

(Fig. 1, 2, 3, 4, By courtesy of Baroda State Museum, India).

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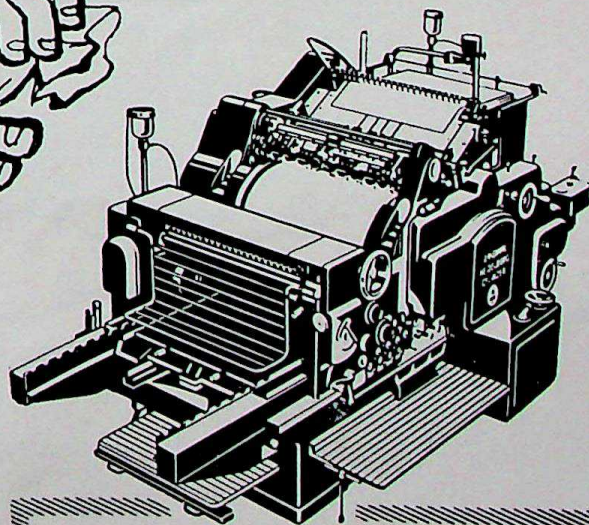
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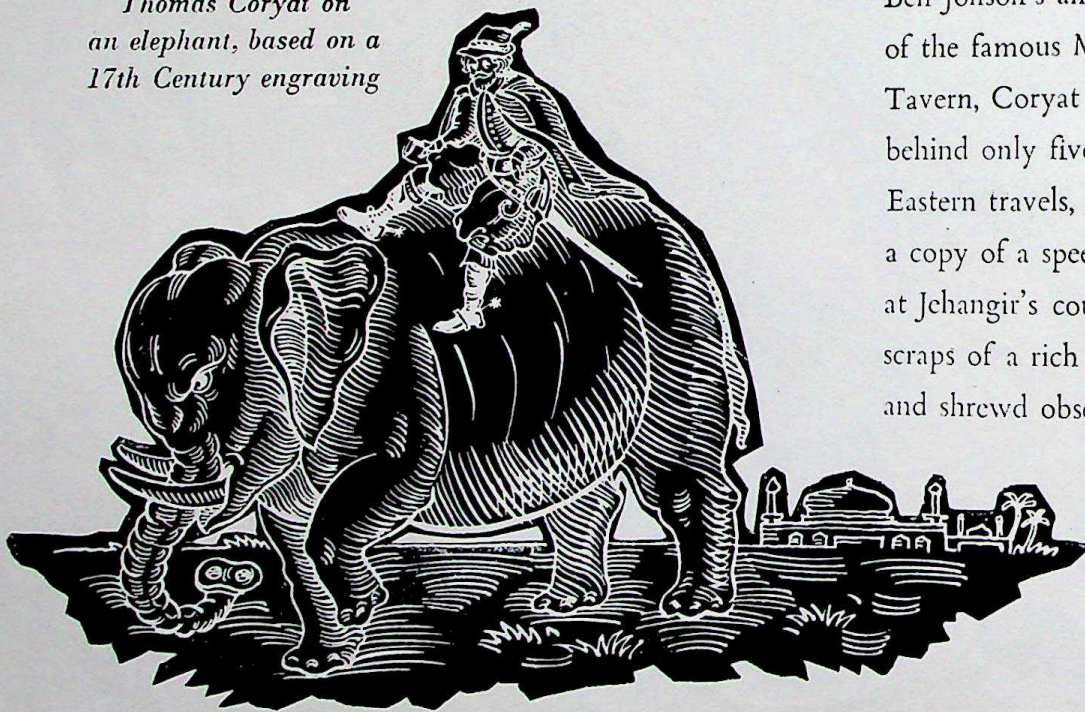
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the Tapti. A friend of Ben Jonson's and a habitue of the famous Mermaid Tavern, Coryat has left behind only five letters of his Eastern travels, including a copy of a speech in Persian at Jehangir's court, mere scraps of a rich feast of witty and shrewd observations.

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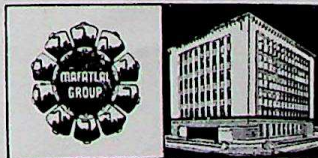
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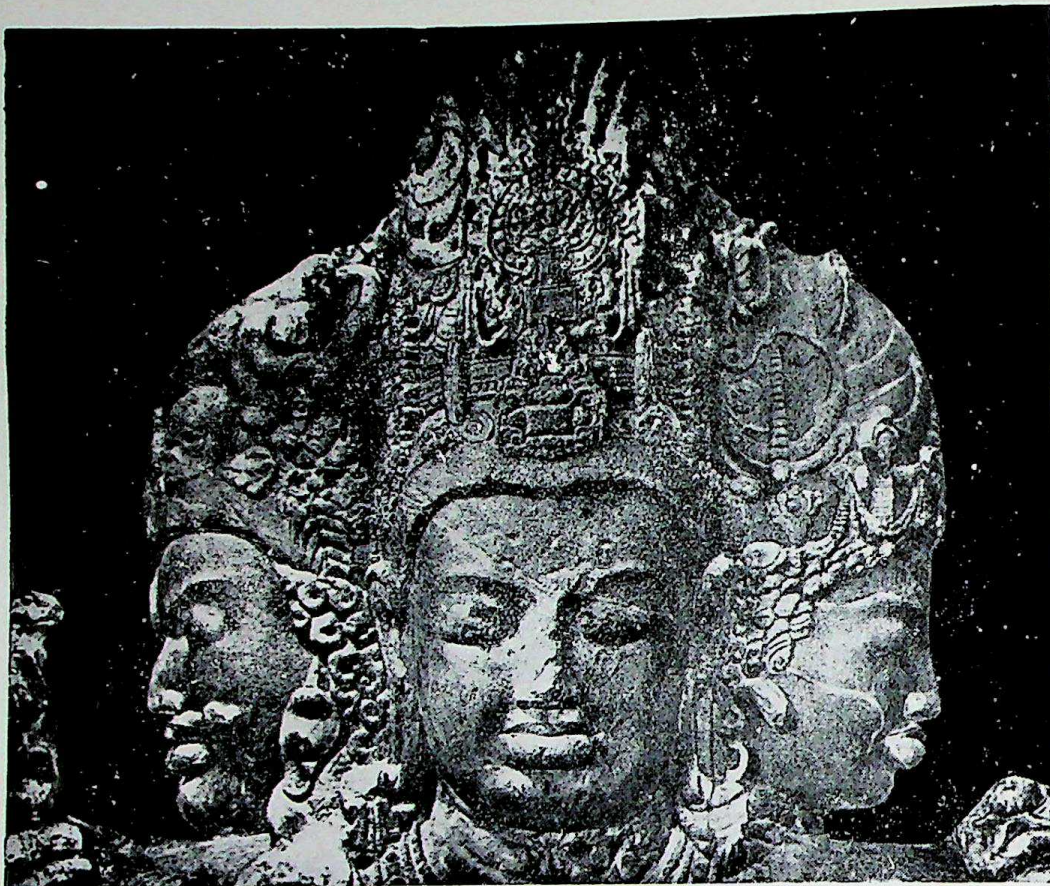
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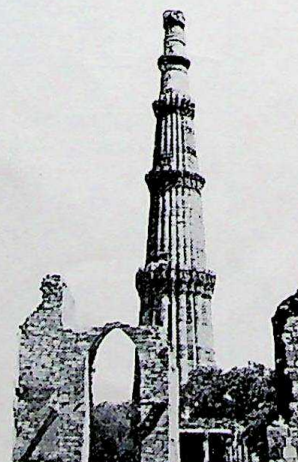
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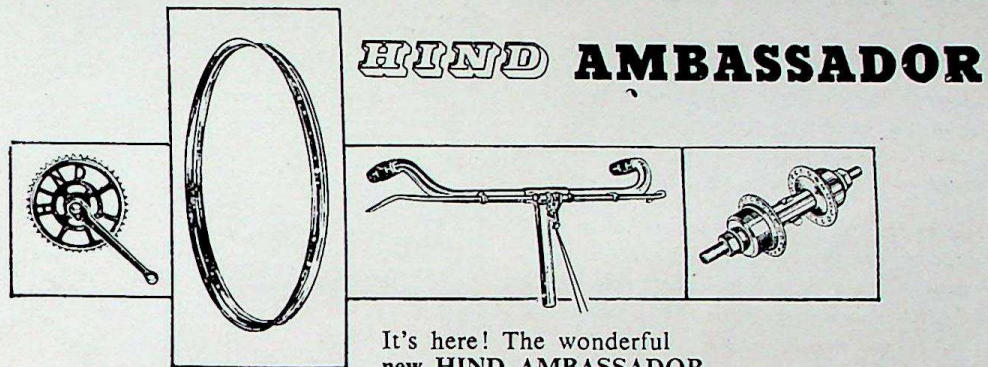
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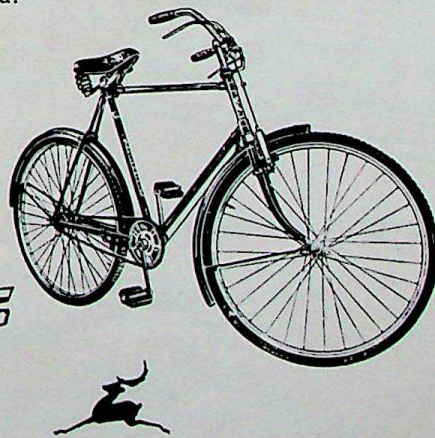
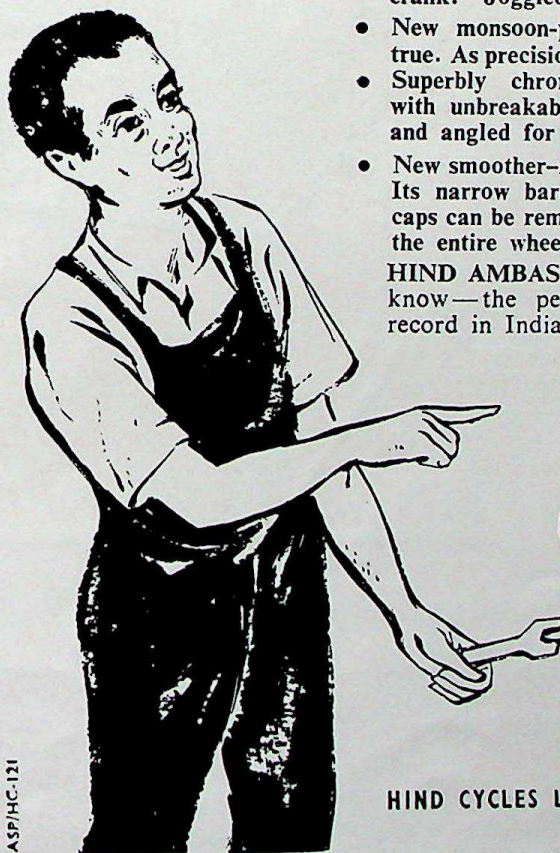


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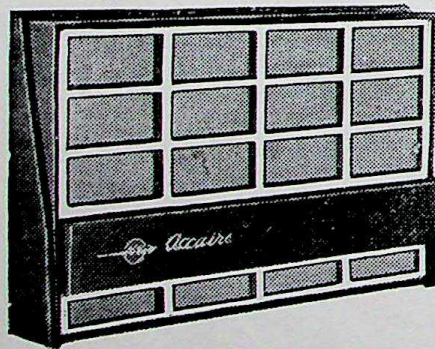
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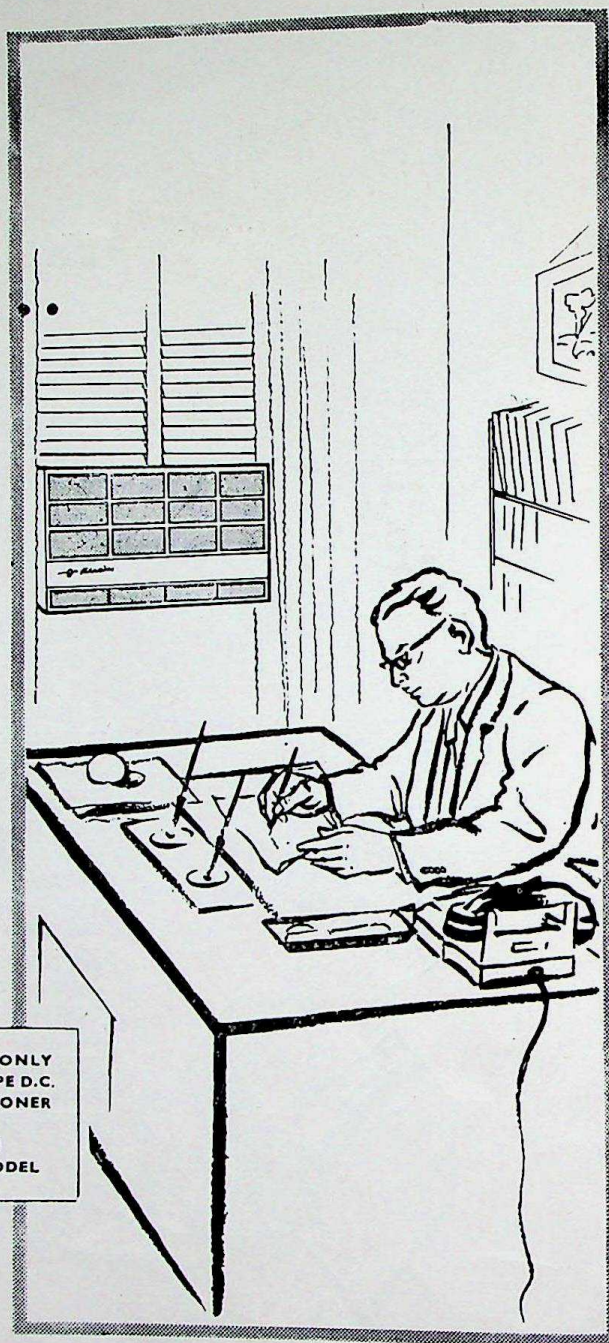
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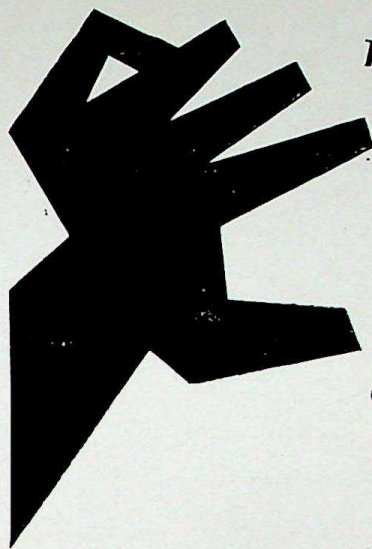


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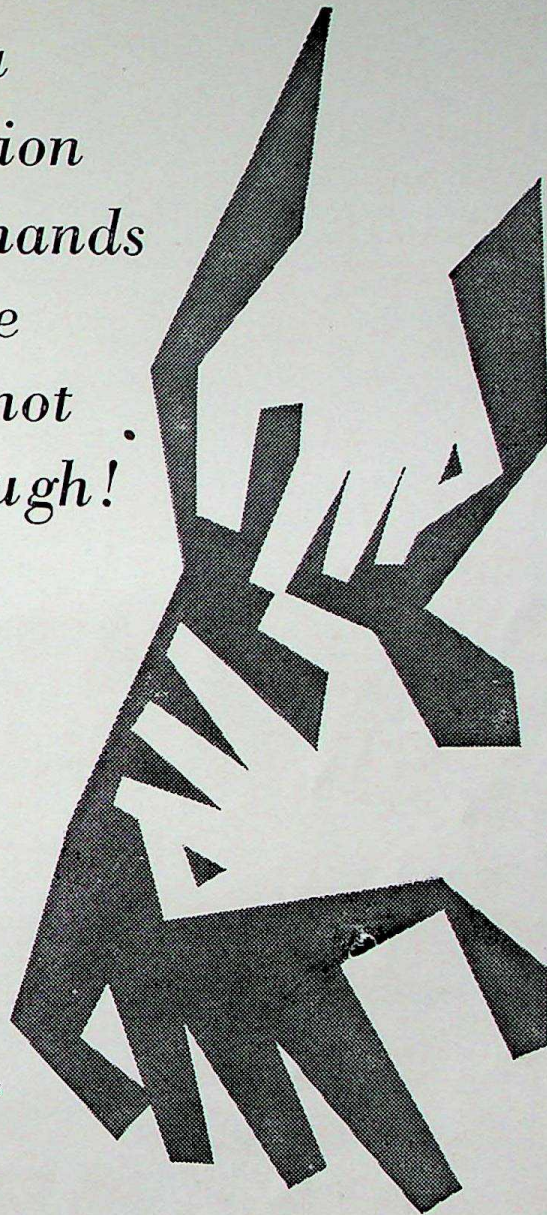
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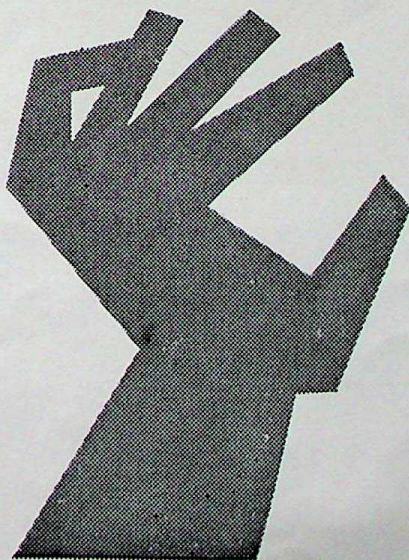
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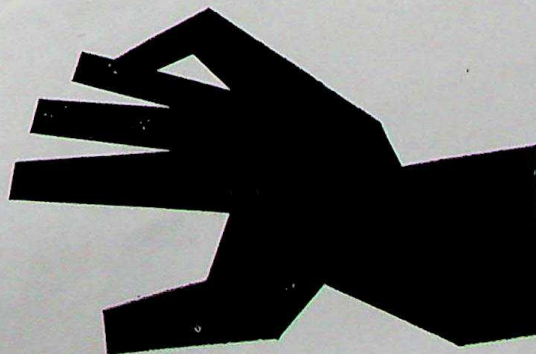
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